

COLLEGE SUCCESS AND ADVANCED ESL WRITING



Talley Caruso
Chabot College

College Success and Advanced ESL Writing

Talley Caruso, MA TESOL

Chabot College

How to Use

About College Success and Advanced ESL Writing

College Success and Advanced ESL Writing is an Open Educational Resource (OER) that helps students build confidence in reading and writing in preparation for (pre-) first-year college writing. Starting with strategies for active reading and note-taking, it walks learners step by step through the writing process. With adaptable materials for teachers and clear supports for students, the textbook connects practical skills with a deeper understanding of the learning process.

Materials Provided

- [Printable worksheets](#) for essay planning and peer-editing
- [Example essay](#) in Google Docs (MLA 8th edition)
- Reflection exercises (Unit 9)
- Additional resources (Unit 10)

How to Use

College Success and Advanced ESL Writing is designed to be used alongside assigned readings and essay-writing projects, giving students practice in analyzing, responding to, and building on other authors' ideas through academic writing. This textbook includes worksheets that guide learners step by step as they summarize key points, organize evidence, and construct clear arguments -- skills essential for success in college-level coursework. Students build resilience and learn to incorporate feedback through multiple-draft revision, supported by self-editing checklists, peer feedback, and writing conferences with the instructor. Along the way, students also build technical skills in Google Docs, examine model student essays, and practice using rubrics to guide and strengthen revision. Reflection is integrated into process, encouraging students to think about how they learn, recognize their progress, and apply new strategies to future writing tasks.

Major Source Material

This guide is a pared-down version of Winer and Waddell's [Reading, Writing, Research, and Reasoning: An Advanced ESL Text](#) (2022). I've intentionally kept it concise to help teachers go deeper with a few essential writing practices. If you want a more in-depth version, I highly recommend checking out their textbook.

If you would like more details on how to guide students through learning process, reading and note-taking, and study skills - check out [OpenStax: Preparing for College Success](#) (2023).

Teaching Tips

These tips are for both English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) teachers and faculty who teach writing in any discipline, especially those without formal training in supporting multilingual learners. The strategies below are organized into three areas: supporting real-time communication, improving accessibility and comprehension, and fostering lifelong learning.

Supporting real-time communication

1. Speak slowly and clearly so students can follow. Use shorter sentences.
2. Allow for wait time (pause for longer) after asking questions so learners can process.
3. Check for understanding by asking students to restate instructions.
4. Encourage peer support, [even in languages other than English](#).

5. Be direct. Avoid (or least, explain) idioms, jargon, and/or colloquial expressions.

Improving accessibility and comprehension

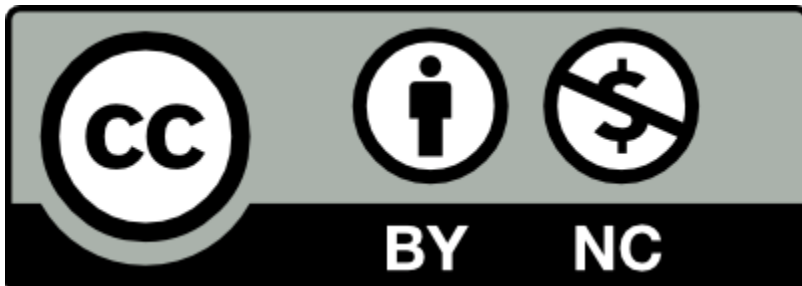
1. Read aloud together during class (one speaker at a time) to check comprehension.
2. Pronounce key vocabulary words as a group for practice (teacher speaks, then students as class).
3. Write legibly and in large print for all students can see.
4. Create a shared "[class notes](#)" Google Doc for readability (screen projection) and review.
5. Use visual and examples (charts, diagrams, sample sentences) to reinforce meaning.

Fostering lifelong learning

1. Demonstrate online tools (e.g., [Merriam-Webster](#), [YouGlish](#)) for independent study.
2. Break tasks into smaller steps to reduce overwhelm.
3. Model experimentation to show that trying new strategies is part of learning.
4. Measure and celebrate progress to build confidence and resilience.
5. Encourage student reflection (e.g., ask students what strategies help them most).

This is an Open Educational Resource - please use, adapt, and remix!

This OER was developed with the support of the [ZTC Grant Program](#) funded by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. It is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#) (CC BY-NC 4.0), which means it's free to use, adapt, and share for educational purposes.



This text is disseminated via the Open Education Resource (OER) LibreTexts Project (<https://LibreTexts.org>) and like the thousands of other texts available within this powerful platform, it is freely available for reading, printing, and "consuming."

The LibreTexts mission is to bring together students, faculty, and scholars in a collaborative effort to provide an accessible, and comprehensive platform that empowers our community to develop, curate, adapt, and adopt openly licensed resources and technologies; through these efforts we can reduce the financial burden borne from traditional educational resource costs, ensuring education is more accessible for students and communities worldwide.

Most, but not all, pages in the library have licenses that may allow individuals to make changes, save, and print this book. Carefully consult the applicable license(s) before pursuing such effects. Instructors can adopt existing LibreTexts texts or Remix them to quickly build course-specific resources to meet the needs of their students. Unlike traditional textbooks, LibreTexts' web based origins allow powerful integration of advanced features and new technologies to support learning.



LibreTexts is the adaptable, user-friendly non-profit open education resource platform that educators trust for creating, customizing, and sharing accessible, interactive textbooks, adaptive homework, and ancillary materials. We collaborate with individuals and organizations to champion open education initiatives, support institutional publishing programs, drive curriculum development projects, and more.

The LibreTexts libraries are Powered by [NICE CXone Expert](#) and were supported by the Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot Project, the California Education Learning Lab, the UC Davis Office of the Provost, the UC Davis Library, the California State University Affordable Learning Solutions Program, and Merlot. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1246120, 1525057, and 1413739.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation nor the US Department of Education.

Have questions or comments? For information about adoptions or adaptations contact info@LibreTexts.org or visit our main website at <https://LibreTexts.org>.

The LibreTexts name, logo, and book covers are trademarked by LibreTexts, Inc. (a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization) and protected against unauthorized use.

This text was compiled on 09/13/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

How to Use

About the Author

Licensing

1: Understanding the Learning Process

2: The Role of Active Reading

- 2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading
- 2.2: Effective Reading Strategies
- 2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader
- 2.4: Annotation Strategies
- 2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example
- 2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing

3: Exploring the Writing Process

4: Planning Your Writing

- 4.1: Understanding the Assignment
- 4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text
- 4.3: Brainstorming
- 4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims

5: Writing the First Draft

5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement

- 5.1.1: Parallel Structure
- 5.2: Essay Introductions
- 5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs
- 5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph

6: Editing and Revising Your Draft

- 6.1: Peer Editing
- 6.2: Reverse Outline
- 6.3: Knowing When to Cite
- 6.4: Formatting Your Paper
- 6.5: Language Toolkit

7: Working with Evidence

- 7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence
- 7.2: Using Direct Quotes
- 7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases

8: Achieving Your Final Draft

- 8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade

8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals

8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words

8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument

8.5: Using Sentence Variety

9: Reflecting on Your Work

10: Exploring Additional Resources

10.1: Evaluating Your Sources

10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities

10.3: Reflection Essay

Index

Glossary

Detailed Licensing

Detailed Licensing

About the Author



Talley Caruso, M.A. TESOL

Talley Caruso, M.A. TESOL, teaches ESL at Chabot College, Ohlone College, and UC Berkeley, and also volunteers at the Hayward Public Library supporting immigrant learners. She has worked on grant-funded projects that help English learners succeed across disciplines, including *Healthcare Pathways for English Language Learners*.

Before becoming a teacher, Talley led global initiatives at Fortune 500 companies, shaping her commitment to team success by building trust, fostering collaboration across cultures, and guiding diverse teams with clear communication and practical skills.

Committed to Open Educational Resources (OERs), she piloted parts of this textbook in her *Advanced Reading and Composition* course at Chabot College before developing it into a flexible resource for instructors across disciplines. She is also the author of *Digital ESL*, an OER recognized by the British Council, and encourages instructors to adapt and remix this textbook to best serve their students.

Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in **Back Matter/Detailed Licensing**.

This page titled [Licensing](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

1: Understanding the Learning Process

Questions to Consider:

- What are the steps to learning something new?
- How does learning affect the brain?
- What kinds of learning are expected in college?

Learning is a Process

Have you ever thought about how we learn something new? Think about a skill you learned recently. Did you start with an interest in the topic or skill? Next, did you start practicing the skill or learning more about the topic? Maybe you received feedback on your abilities and started refining that skill.

When we go through the learning process, our brains actually change. This is called *neuroplasticity*, or the brain's ability to form or reorganize neural pathways in reaction to the learning process. This means that when you learn something new, and especially if you practice it and fail at getting it right the first time, your brain is changing. When you get better at a skill such as throwing a curveball or learning how to solve for X, your brain is actually reorganizing itself so that you can perform those tasks more quickly.

Your learning process has to begin somewhere (typically, beginner/novice level). Often, students try to speed through reading assignments or take only partial notes. They think that jotting down a few key ideas shows they have adequately learned something. You may learn something, however, it takes much more practice and studying to help you remember that information later. The goal in college classes is to build on foundational knowledge to learn different levels of thinking, which we will talk about in the next section.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Different professors and different courses expect different types of learning from you. Figuring out how you need to learn the material and how you will be tested on it will help you succeed.

If you want some insight into the types of learning you will do in college, you will want to get to know the work of Dr. Benjamin Bloom, an educational psychologist best known for his classification of different levels of learning, and the concept called [Bloom's Taxonomy](#).

The bottom two levels, Remember and Understand, are called "lower levels" of Bloom's because they often take less effort than the others, and they are seen as foundational to the learning process.

The remaining levels are considered "higher levels" of Bloom's because you need to understand the information and do something with it. Some examples include: applying it to a new situation, analyzing its parts, evaluating its strengths and weaknesses, or creating something new from your knowledge.

Not all of your learning in college and the workplace will be at the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy, but as you gain more knowledge and develop more sophisticated academic and workplace skills, you will move beyond merely remembering information.

The first and lowest level is "**Remember**." At this level, you are attempting to recall information, such as definitions of terms or steps in a process. You don't have to really understand (that will come next) the concepts at this level. For example, you may be able to memorize the steps of the Krebs Cycle by naming them in order, but that doesn't mean you truly understand the processes involved and the effects of each step.

The second level is "**Understand**." This is the stage in which you can explain or describe a concept in your own words. If you can restate a definition, concept, or process in your own words, you have a basic understanding of it. These lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy are the fundamental first steps. You need to "Remember" and "Understand" before you can move higher up on the taxonomy.

The next level is “**Apply**,” which shows that you know the concept well enough to use it in a new context. In math classes, you need to remember and understand the steps of a formula. When you apply your knowledge, you know when and how to use that formula to solve a new problem.

When you “**Analyze**” and “**Evaluate**,” you can examine the concepts deeply. For example, you can compare and contrast a concept with another concept (Analyze) or choose the best concept among others (Evaluate).

The final level is “**Create**,” which, according to Bloom, is the pinnacle (peak, top-most level) of learning: If you can create (or recreate) something new based on what you have learned, you have demonstrated understanding of a concept, idea, or skill.

You can read articles and take notes during the professor’s lectures. This will help you remember information for later. This is a good first step to the learning process, but as you will see later, that is not the only or final step to learning.

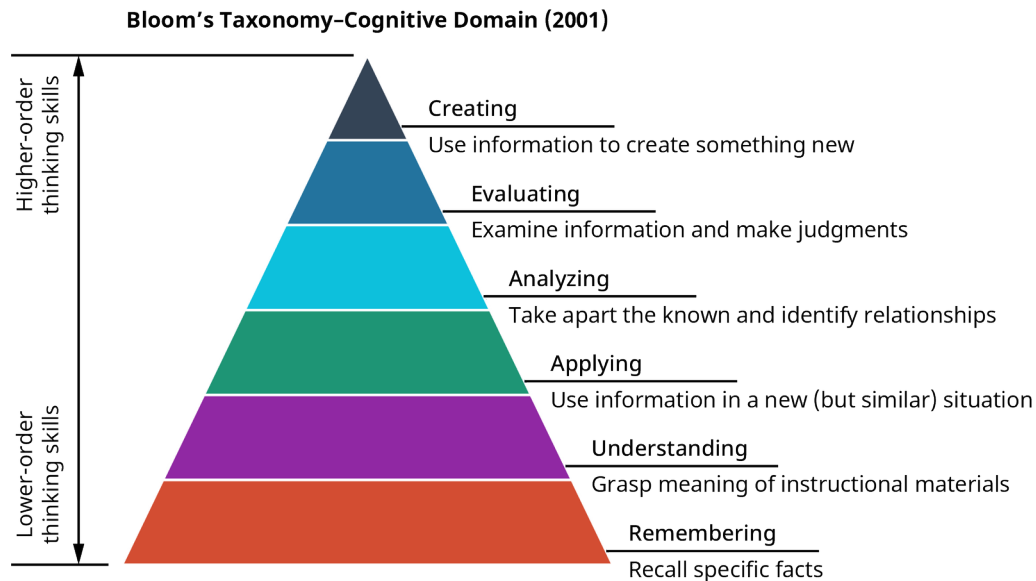


Figure 1.1: Bloom’s Taxonomy provides both instructors and students with a method to classify learning objectives and skills into different levels of complexity. (OpenStax; Amy Baldwin via OpenStax)

Footnotes

- 1Smilkstein, R. (2011). We’re born to learn: Using the brain’s natural learning process to create today’s curriculum. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- 2Bloom, B.S. (1980). All our children learning. NY: McGraw-Hill.

Remixed (shortened and simplified language) by Talley Caruso (2025). The original version can be accessed for free at <https://openstax.org/books/preparing-for-college-success/pages/1-introduction>

2: THE ROLE OF ACTIVE READING

2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading

2.2: Effective Reading Strategies

2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader

2.4: Annotation Strategies

2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example

2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing

This page titled [2: The Role of Active Reading](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading

Questions to Consider:

- How can understanding the different types of reading help you academically and personally?
- What can you do to prepare to read for college?

Reading for Various Reasons

Research supports the idea that reading is good for you. Students who read at or above reading level throughout elementary and secondary school have a higher chance of starting—and more importantly, finishing—college. Educational researchers convincingly claim that reading improves everything from grades to vocabulary.³

If you don't particularly enjoy reading, don't despair. We read for a variety of reasons, and you may just have to step back and take a bigger picture of your reading habits to understand why you avoid engaging in this important skill. The myriad distractions we now face as well as the intense information overload we can suffer on a daily basis in all aspects of our lives can combine to make it difficult to slow down to read, an activity that demands at least a modicum of attention in a way that most television and music do not. You may need to adjust your schedule for more reading time, especially in college, because every class you take will expect you to read more pages than you probably have in the past.

One last suggestion about reading: Many students report that they don't like to read unless they are already interested in the topic. This is understandable when considering that many assigned texts in college may be something students are not familiar with, don't immediately see the benefit of knowing, and are written in a less-than-engaging manner. Your goal when assigned reading that seems "uninteresting" is to develop your curiosity about the subject and approach your reading like a detective looking for clues to solve a larger mystery. Asking yourself "What will I gain from reading this?" and "How will this reading help me develop skills that I will need now and in the future?" are good places to start with developing curiosity. You may be surprised that you are interested in the topic and want to expand your knowledge by reading more about it.

Types of Reading

You may read small items purely for immediate information, such as notes, e-mails, or directions to an unfamiliar location. You can find all sorts of information online about how to fix a faucet or tie a secure knot. You won't have to spend too much time reading these sorts of texts because you have a specific goal in mind for them, and once you have accomplished that goal, you do not need to prolong the reading experience. These encounters with texts may not be memorable or stunning, but they don't need to be. When we consider why we read longer pieces—outside of reading for pleasure—we can usually categorize the reasons into about two categories: 1) reading to introduce ourselves to new content, and 2) reading to more fully comprehend familiar content.



Figure 4.3 A bookstore or library can be a great place to explore. Aside from books and resources you need, you may find something that interests you or helps with your course work. (Credit: MarLeah Cole / Flickr Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Reading to Introduce New Content

Consider the following scenario: Glenn felt uncomfortable talking with his new roommates because he realized very quickly that he didn't know anything about their major—architecture. Of course he knew that it had something to do with buildings and construction sites, but the field was so different from his discipline of biology that he decided he needed to find out more so he could at least engage in friendly conversation with his roommates. Since he would likely not go into their field, he didn't need to go into full research mode. Glenn's purpose for reading was specific to his situation. When we read to discover new content, we can start off small and increase to better and more sophisticated sources. Much of our further study and reading depends on the sources we originally read, our purpose for finding out about this new topic, and our interest level.

Chances are, you have done this sort of exploratory reading before. You may read reviews of a new restaurant or look at what people say about a movie you aren't sure you want to spend the money to see at the theater. This reading helps you decide. In academic settings, much of what you read in your courses may be relatively new content to you. You may have heard the word *volcano* and have a general notion of what it means, but until you study geology and other sciences in depth, you may not have a full understanding of the environmental origins, ecological impacts, and societal and historic responses to volcanoes.

These perspectives will come from reading and digesting various material. When you are working with new content, you may need to schedule more time for reading and comprehending the information because you may need to look up unfamiliar terminology and you may have to stop more frequently to make sure you are truly grasping what the material means. When you have few ways to connect new material to your own prior knowledge, you have to work more diligently to comprehend it.

Application

Try an experiment with a group of classmates. Without looking on the Internet, try to brainstorm a list of 10 topics about which all of you may be interested but for which you know very little or nothing at all. Try to make the topics somewhat obscure rather than ordinary—for example, the possibility of the *non-planet Pluto being reclassified as a planet again* (instead of "why we need to drink water.")

After you have this random list, think of ways you could find information to read about these weird topics. Our short answer is always: Google or ChatGPT. But think of other ways as well. How else could you read about these topics if you don't know anything about them? You may well be in a similar circumstance in some of your college classes, so you should listen carefully to your classmates on this one.

Think beyond past answers such as “I’d go to the library,” and press for what that researcher would do once at the library. What types of articles or books would you try to find? One reason that you should not always ignore the idea of doing research at the physical library is because once you are there and looking for information, you have a vast number of other sources readily available to you in a highly organized location. You also can tap into the human resources represented by the research librarians who likely can redirect you if you cannot find appropriate sources.

Reading to Comprehend Familiar Content

Reading about unfamiliar content is one thing, but what if you do know something about a topic already? Do you really still need to keep reading about it? Probably. For example, what if during the brainstorming activity in the activity above, you secretly felt rather smug because you know about the demotion of the one-time planet Pluto and that there is currently quite the scientific debate going on about that whole de-planet-ation thing. Of course, you didn’t say anything during the study session, mostly to spare your classmates any embarrassment, but you are pretty familiar with Pluto-gate. So now what? Can you learn anything new?

Again—probably. When did Pluto’s qualifications to be considered a planet come into question? What are the qualifications for being considered a planet? Why? Who even gets to decide these things? Why was it called *Pluto* in the first place? On Amazon alone, you can find hundreds of books about the once-planet Pluto (not to be confused with the Disney dog also named Pluto). A Google search brings up over 34 million options for your reading pleasure. You’ll have plenty to read, even if you do know something or quite a bit about a topic, but you’ll approach reading about a familiar topic and an unfamiliar one differently.

With familiar content, you can do some initial skimming to determine what you already know in the book or article, and mark what may be new information or a different perspective. You may not have to give your full attention to the information you know, but you will spend more time on the new viewpoints so you can determine how this new data meshes with what you already know. Is this writer claiming a radical new definition for the topic or an entirely opposite way to consider the subject matter, connecting it to other topics or disciplines in ways you have never considered?

When college students encounter material in a discipline-specific context and have some familiarity with the topic, they sometimes can allow themselves to become a bit overconfident about their knowledge level. Just because a student may have read an article or two or may have seen a TV documentary on a subject such as the criminal mind, that does not make them an expert. What makes an expert is a person who thoroughly studies a subject, usually for years, and understands all the possible perspectives of a subject as well as the potential for misunderstanding due to personal biases and the availability of false information about the topic.

Footnotes

- ³Cunningham, A. and Stanovich, K. (1998). “What reading does for the mind.” The American Federation of Teachers. *American Educator*, Vol. 22, No. 1–2, pp. 8–15.

Remixed by Talley Caruso (2025). The original version can be accessed for free at <https://openstax.org/books/preparing-for-college-success/pages/4-2-the-nature-and-types-of-reading>

This page titled [2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

- 1.4: Qui est-ce ? Identifier les personnes by William J. Carrasco, Shahrzad Zahedi, and Caren Barnezet Parrish is licensed [CC BY-NC 4.0](#).

2.2: Effective Reading Strategies

Questions to Consider:

What methods can you incorporate into your routine to allow adequate time for reading?

What are the benefits and approaches to active and critical reading?

Do your courses or major have specific reading requirements?

Allowing Adequate Time for Reading

You should determine the reading requirements and expectations for every class very early in the semester. You also need to understand why you are reading the particular text you are assigned. Do you need to read closely for minute details that determine cause and effect? Or is your instructor asking you to skim several sources so you become more familiar with the topic? Knowing this reasoning will help you decide your timing, what notes to take, and how best to undertake the reading assignment.



Figure 4.4 If you plan to make time for reading while you commute, remember that unexpected events like delays and cancellations could impact your concentration. (Credit: The LEAF Project / Flickr, Public Domain (CC-0))

Depending on the makeup of your schedule, you may end up reading both primary sources—such as legal documents, historic letters, or diaries—as well as textbooks, articles, and secondary sources, such as summaries or argumentative essays that use primary sources to stake a claim. You may also need to read current journalistic texts to stay up to date in local or global affairs. A realistic approach to scheduling your time to allow you to read and review all the reading you have for the semester will help you accomplish what can sometimes seem like an overwhelming task.

When you allow adequate time in your hectic schedule for reading, you are investing in your own success. Reading isn't a magic pill, but it may seem like it when you consider all the benefits people reap from this ordinary practice. Famous successful people throughout history have been voracious readers. In fact, former U.S. president Harry Truman once said, "Not all readers are leaders, but all leaders are readers." Writer of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, inventor, and also former U.S. president Thomas Jefferson claimed "I cannot live without books" at a time when keeping and reading books was an expensive pastime. Knowing what it meant to be kept from the joys of reading, 19th-century abolitionist Frederick Douglass said, "Once you learn to read, you will be forever free." And finally, George R. R. Martin, the prolific author of the wildly successful *Game of Thrones* empire, declared, "A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies . . . The man who never reads lives only one."

You can make time for reading in a number of ways that include determining your usual reading pace and speed, scheduling active reading sessions, and practicing recursive reading strategies.

Determining Reading Speed and Pacing

To determine your reading speed, select a section of text—passages in a textbook or pages in a novel. Time yourself reading that material for exactly 5 minutes, and note how much reading you accomplished in those 5 minutes. Multiply the amount of reading you accomplished in 5 minutes by 12 to determine your average reading pace (5 times 12 equals the 60 minutes of an hour). Of course, your reading pace will be different and take longer if you are taking notes while you read, but this calculation of reading pace gives you a good way to estimate your reading speed that you can adapt to other forms of reading.

Example Reading Times

Reader	Pages Read in 5 Minutes	Pages per Hour	Approximate Hours to Read 500 Pages
Marta	4	48	10 hours, 30 minutes
Jordi	3	36	13 hours
Estevan	5	60	8 hours, 20 minutes

In the table above, you can see three students with different reading speeds. So, for instance, if Marta was able to read 4 pages of a dense novel for her English class in 5 minutes, she should be able to read about 48 pages in one hour. Knowing this, Marta can accurately determine how much time she needs to devote to finishing the novel within a set amount of time, instead of just guessing. If the novel Marta is reading is 497 pages, then Marta would take the total page count (497) and divide that by her hourly reading rate (48 pages/hour) to determine that she needs about 10 to 11 hours overall. To finish the novel spread out over two weeks, Marta needs to read a little under an hour a day to accomplish this goal.

Calculating your reading rate in this manner does not take into account days where you're too distracted and you have to reread passages or days when you just aren't in the mood to read. And your reading rate will likely vary depending on how dense the content you're reading is (e.g., a complex textbook vs. a comic book). Your pace may slow down somewhat if you are not very interested in what the text is about. What this method *will* help you do is be realistic about your reading time as opposed to waging a guess based on nothing and then becoming worried when you have far more reading to finish than the time available.

Chapter 2 (from the original text, *Preparing for College Success*), "[Managing Your Time and Priorities](#)," offers more detail on how best to determine your speed from one type of reading to the next so you are better able to schedule your reading.

Scheduling Set Times for Active Reading

Active reading takes longer than reading through passages without stopping. You may not need to read your latest sci-fi series actively while you're lounging on the beach, but many other reading situations demand more attention from you. Active reading is particularly important for college courses. You are a scholar actively engaging with the text by posing questions, seeking answers, and clarifying any confusing elements. Plan to spend at least twice as long to read actively than to read passages without taking notes or otherwise marking select elements of the text.

To determine the time you need for active reading, use the same calculations you use to determine your traditional reading speed and double it. Remember that you need to determine your reading pace for all the classes you have in a particular semester and multiply your speed by the number of classes you have that require different types of reading. The table below shows the differences in time needed between reading quickly without taking notes and reading actively.

Example Active Reading Times

Reader	Pages Read in 5 Minutes	Pages per Hour	Approximate Hours to Read 500 Pages	Approximate Hours to Actively Read 500 Pages
Jordi	3	36	13 hours	26 hours
Marta	4	48	10 hours, 30 minutes	21 hours

Reader	Pages Read in 5 Minutes	Pages per Hour	Approximate Hours to Read 500 Pages	Approximate Hours to Actively Read 500 Pages
Estevan	5	60	8 hours, 20 minutes	16 hours, 40 minutes

Practicing Recursive Reading Strategies

One fact about reading for college courses that may become frustrating is that, in a way, it never ends. For all the reading you do, you end up doing even more rereading. It may be the same content, but you may be reading the passage more than once to detect the emphasis the writer places on one aspect of the topic or how frequently the writer dismisses a significant counterargument. This rereading is called recursive reading.

For most of what you read at the college level, you are trying to make sense of the text for a specific purpose—not just because the topic interests or entertains you. You need your full attention to decipher everything that’s going on in complex reading material—and you even need to be considering what the writer of the piece may *not* be including and why. This is why reading for comprehension is recursive.

Specifically, this boils down to seeing reading not as a formula but as a process that is far more circular than linear. You may read a selection from beginning to end, which is an excellent starting point, but for comprehension, you’ll need to go back and reread passages to determine meaning and make connections between the reading and the bigger learning environment that led you to the selection—that may be a single course or a program in your college, or it may be the larger discipline, such as all biologists or the community of scholars studying beach erosion.

People often say writing is rewriting. For college courses, reading is rereading, but rereading with the intention of improving comprehension and taking notes.

Strong readers engage in numerous steps, sometimes combining more than one step simultaneously, but knowing the steps nonetheless. They include, not always in this order:

- bringing any prior knowledge about the topic to the reading session,
- asking yourself pertinent questions, both orally and in writing, about the content you are reading,
- inferring and/or implying information from what you read,
- learning unfamiliar discipline-specific terms,
- evaluating what you are reading, and eventually,
- applying what you’re reading to other learning and life situations you encounter.

Let’s break these steps into manageable chunks, because you are actually doing quite a lot when you read.

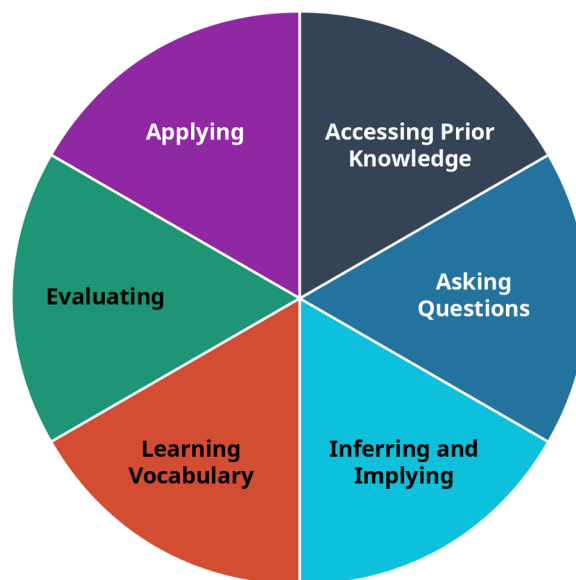


Figure 4.5 The six elements of recursive reading should be considered as a circular, not linear, process.

Accessing Prior Knowledge

When you read, you naturally think of anything else you may know about the topic, but when you read deliberately and actively, you make yourself more aware of accessing this prior knowledge. Have you ever watched a documentary about this topic? Did you study some aspect of it in another class? Do you have a hobby that is somehow connected to this material? All of this thinking will help you make sense of what you are reading.

Asking Questions

Humans are naturally curious beings. As you read actively, you should be asking questions about the topic you are reading. Don't just say the questions in your mind; write them down. You may ask: Why is this topic important? What is the relevance of this topic currently? Was this topic important a long time ago but irrelevant now? Why did my professor assign this reading?

You need a place where you can actually write down these questions; a separate page in your notes is a good place to begin. If you are taking notes on your computer, start a new document and write down the questions. Leave some room to answer the questions when you begin and again after you read.

Inferring and Implying

When you read, you can take the information on the page and *infer*, or conclude responses to related challenges from evidence or from your own reasoning. A student will likely be able to infer what material the professor will include on an exam by taking good notes throughout the classes leading up to the test.

Writers may *imply* information without directly stating a fact for a variety of reasons. Sometimes a writer may not want to come out explicitly and state a bias, but may imply or hint at his or her preference for one political party or another. You have to read carefully to find implications because they are indirect, but watching for them will help you comprehend the whole meaning of a passage.

Learning Vocabulary

Vocabulary specific to certain disciplines helps practitioners in that field engage and communicate with each other. Few people beyond undertakers and archeologists likely use the term *sarcophagus* in everyday communications, but for those disciplines, it is a meaningful distinction. Looking at the example, you can use context clues to figure out the meaning of the term *sarcophagus* because it is something undertakers and/or archeologists would recognize. At the very least, you can guess that it has something to do with death. As a potential professional in the field you're studying, you need to know the lingo. You may already have a system in place to learn discipline-specific vocabulary, so use what you know works for you. Two strong strategies are to look up words in a dictionary (online or hard copy) to ensure you have the exact meaning for your discipline and to keep a dedicated list of words you see often in your reading. You can list the words with a short definition so you have a quick reference guide to help you learn the vocabulary.

Evaluating

Intelligent people always question and evaluate. This doesn't mean they don't trust others; they just need verification of facts to understand a topic well. It doesn't make sense to learn incomplete or incorrect information about a subject just because you didn't take the time to evaluate all the sources at your disposal. When early explorers were afraid to sail the world for fear of falling off the edge, they weren't stupid; they just didn't have all the necessary data to evaluate the situation.

When you evaluate a text, you are seeking to understand the presented topic. Depending on how long the text is, you will perform a number of steps and repeat many of these steps to evaluate all the elements the author presents. When you evaluate a text, you need to do the following:

- Scan the title and all headings.
- Read through the entire passage fully.
- Question what main point the author is making.

- Decide who the audience is.
- Identify what evidence/support the author uses.
- Consider if the author presents a balanced perspective on the main point.
- Recognize if the author introduced any biases in the text.

When you go through a text looking for each of these elements, you need to go beyond just answering the surface question; for instance, the audience may be a specific field of scientists, but could anyone else understand the text with some explanation? Why would that be important?

Applying

When you learn something new, it always connects to other knowledge you already have. One challenge we have is applying new information. It may be interesting to know the distance to the moon, but how do we apply it to something we need to do? If your biology instructor asked you to list several challenges of colonizing Mars and you do not know much about that planet's exploration, you may be able to use your knowledge of how far Earth is from the moon to apply it to the new task. You may have to read several other texts in addition to reading graphs and charts to find this information.

That was the challenge the early space explorers faced along with myriad unknowns before space travel was a more regular occurrence. They had to take what they already knew and could study and read about and apply it to an unknown situation. These explorers wrote down their challenges, failures, and successes, and now scientists read those texts as a part of the ever-growing body of text about space travel. Application is a sophisticated level of thinking that helps turn theory into practice and challenges into successes.

Preparing to Read for Specific Disciplines in College

Different disciplines in college may have specific expectations, but you can depend on all subjects asking you to read to some degree. In this college reading requirement, you can succeed by learning to read actively, researching the topic and author, and recognizing how your own preconceived notions affect your reading. Reading for college isn't the same as reading for pleasure or even just reading to learn something on your own because you are casually interested.

In college courses, your instructor may ask you to read articles, chapters, books, or *primary sources* (those original documents about which we write and study, such as letters between historic figures or the Declaration of Independence). Your instructor may want you to have a general background on a topic before you dive into that subject in class, so that you know the history of a topic, can start thinking about it, and can engage in a class discussion with more than a passing knowledge of the issue.

If you are about to participate in an in-depth six-week consideration of the U.S. Constitution but have never read it or anything written about it, you will have a hard time looking at anything in detail or understanding how and why it is significant. As you can imagine, a great deal has been written about the Constitution by scholars and citizens since the late 1700s when it was first put to paper (that's how they did it then). While the actual document isn't that long (about 12–15 pages depending on how it is presented), learning the details on how it came about, who was involved, and why it was and still is a significant document would take a considerable amount of time to read and digest. So, how do you do it all? Especially when you may have an instructor who drops hints that you may also *love* to read a historic novel covering the same time period . . . in your *spare time*, not required, of course! It can be daunting, especially if you are taking more than one course that has time-consuming reading lists. With a few strategic techniques, you can manage it all, but know that you must have a plan and schedule your required reading so you *are* also able to pick up that recommended historic novel—it may give you an entirely new perspective on the issue.

Strategies for Reading in College Disciplines

No universal law exists for how much reading instructors and institutions expect college students to undertake for various disciplines. Suffice it to say, it's a LOT.

For most students, it is the volume of reading that catches them most off guard when they begin their college careers. A full course load might require 10–15 hours of reading per week, some of that covering content that will be more difficult than the reading for other courses.

You cannot possibly read word-for-word every single document you need to read for all your classes. That doesn't mean you give up or decide to only read for your favorite classes or concoct a scheme to read 17 percent for each class and see how that works

for you. You need to learn to skim, annotate, and take notes. All of these techniques will help you comprehend more of what you read, which is why we read in the first place. We'll talk more later about annotating and note-taking, but for now consider what you know about skimming as opposed to active reading.

Active Reading Strategies

Active reading differs significantly from skimming or reading for pleasure. You can think of active reading as a sort of conversation between you and the text (maybe between you and the author, but you don't want to get the author's personality too involved in this metaphor because that may skew your engagement with the text).

When you sit down to determine what your different classes expect you to read and you create a reading schedule to ensure you complete all the reading, think about when you should read the material strategically, not just how to *get it all done*. You should read textbook chapters and other reading assignments *before* you go into a lecture about that information. Don't wait to see how the lecture goes before you read the material, or you may not understand the information in the lecture. Reading before class helps you put ideas together between your reading and the information you hear and discuss in class.

Different disciplines naturally have different types of texts, and you need to take this into account when you schedule your time for reading class material. For example, you may look at a poem for your world literature class and assume that it will not take you long to read because it is relatively short compared to the dense textbook you have for your economics class. But reading and understanding a poem can take a considerable amount of time when you realize you may need to stop numerous times to review the separate word meanings and how the words form images and connections throughout the poem.

Reading Primary and Secondary Sources

Primary sources are original documents we study and from which we glean information; primary sources include letters, first editions of books, legal documents, and a variety of other texts. When scholars look at these documents to understand a period in history or a scientific challenge and then write about their findings, the scholar's article is considered a secondary source. Readers have to keep several factors in mind when reading both primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources may contain dated material we now know is inaccurate. It may contain personal beliefs and biases the original writer didn't intend to be openly published, and it may even present fanciful or creative ideas that do not support current knowledge. Readers can still gain great insight from primary sources, but readers need to understand the context from which the writer of the primary source wrote the text.

Likewise, secondary sources are inevitably another person's perspective on the primary source, so a reader of secondary sources must also be aware of potential biases or preferences the secondary source writer inserts in the writing that may persuade an incautious reader to interpret the primary source in a particular manner.

For example, if you were to read a secondary source that is examining the U.S. Declaration of Independence (the primary source), you would have a much clearer idea of how the secondary source scholar presented the information from the primary source if you also read the Declaration for yourself instead of trusting the other writer's interpretation. Most scholars are honest in writing secondary sources, but you as a reader of the source are trusting the writer to present a balanced perspective of the primary source. When possible, you should attempt to read a primary source in conjunction with the secondary source. The Internet helps immensely with this practice.

Researching Topic and Author

During your preview stage, sometimes called pre-reading, you can easily pick up on information from various sources that may help you understand the material you're reading more fully or place it in context with other important works in the discipline. If your selection is a book, flip it over or turn to the back pages and look for an author's biography or note from the author. See if the book itself contains any other information about the author or the subject matter.

The main things you need to recall from your reading in college are the topics covered and how the information fits into the discipline. You can find these parts throughout the textbook chapter in the form of headings in larger and bold font, summary lists, and important quotations pulled out of the narrative. Use these features as you read to help you determine what the most important ideas are.

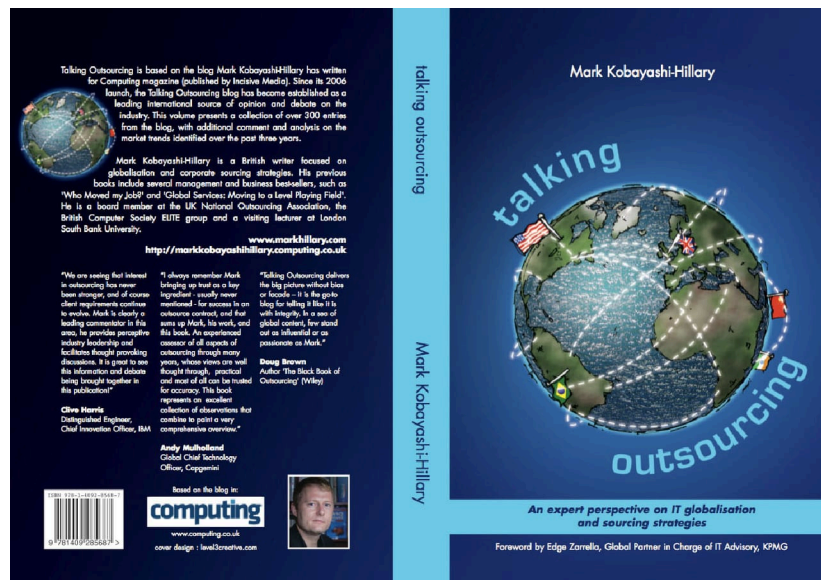


Figure 4.6 Learning about the book you're reading can provide good context and information. Look for an author's biography and forward on the back cover or in the first few pages. (Credit: Mark Hillary / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Remember, many books use quotations about the book or author as testimonials in a marketing approach to sell more books, so these may not be the most reliable sources of unbiased opinions, but it's a start. Sometimes you can find a list of other books the author has written near the front of a book. Do you recognize any of the other titles? Can you do an Internet search for the name of the book or author? Go beyond the search results that want you to buy the book and see if you can glean any other relevant information about the author or the reading selection. Beyond a standard Internet search, try the library article database. These are more relevant to academic disciplines and contain resources you typically will not find in a standard search engine. If you are unfamiliar with how to use the library database, ask a reference librarian on campus. They are often underused resources that can point you in the right direction.

Understanding Your Own Preset Ideas on a Topic

Consider this scenario: Laura really enjoys learning about environmental issues. She has read many books and watched numerous televised documentaries on this topic and actively seeks out additional information on the environment. While Laura's interest can help her understand a new reading encounter about the environment, Laura also has to be aware that with this interest, she brings forward her preset ideas and biases about the topic. Sometimes these prejudices against other ideas relate to religion or nationality or even just tradition. Without evidence, thinking the way we always have is not a good enough reason; evidence can change, and at the very least it needs honest review and assessment to determine its validity. Ironically, we may not want to learn new ideas because that may mean we would have to give up old ideas we have already mastered, which can be a daunting prospect.

With every reading situation about the environment, Laura needs to remain open-minded about what she is about to read and pay careful attention if she begins to ignore certain parts of the text because of her preconceived notions. Learning new information can be very difficult if you balk at ideas that are different from what you've always thought. You may have to force yourself to listen to a different viewpoint multiple times to make sure you are not closing your mind to a viable solution your mindset does not currently allow.

Reflection

Can you think of times you have struggled reading college content for a course?

Which of these strategies might have helped you understand the content? Why do you think those strategies would work?

Remixed by Talley Caruso (2025). The original version can be accessed for free at <https://openstax.org/books/preparing-for-college-success/pages/4-3-effective-reading-strategies>

This page titled [2.2: Effective Reading Strategies](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

- [1.4: Qui est-ce ? Identifier les personnes](#) by William J. Carrasco, Shahrzad Zahedi, and Caren Barnezet Parrish is licensed [CC BY-NC 4.0](#).

2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader

Reading as an active process

Reading is not a passive process. As good readers, we are constantly connecting our own knowledge to the text and using different strategies to understand. In 1.3: [Identifying Reading Strategies and Prereading a Text](#) we have already looked at two strategies: prereading and using a KWL+ chart to connect the text to what you already know about the topic and what you want to learn. Here are some other strategies that you might use to read actively. Which strategies do you usually use? Are there others that you want to try?

- Skipping confusing parts and returning to them after you finish
- Taking notes about the main points of each section
- Reading some parts quickly and some parts slowly
- Reading again
- Telling someone else what you understand

Telling someone about the reading

Let's try another active reading strategy: telling someone else about what you understand. Reading quickly with a timer makes you search for the overall meaning without stopping to look up words or get caught in the small details. Like signs at a protest (see Figure 1.4.1), you can only focus on the most important ideas.



Figure 2.3.1: "Los Angeles March for Immigrant Rights" by Molly Adams is licensed under CC-BY 2.0.

Try this!

Here is a report from UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund). Follow these steps:

1. Set a timer for 2 minutes.
2. Read as much as you can in 2 minutes.
3. In your own words, tell a classmate what you understand from the reading.
4. Set the timer for 2 minutes and read again from the top.
5. Again, tell your classmate what you understand from the reading.
6. Read the entire report again without a timer and tell your partner again what you learned.

7. Discuss whether this helped you to understand the report.

Reading an International Report: A Child is a Child: Protecting Children on the Move from Violence, Abuse and Exploitation

Millions of children are on the move across international borders – fleeing violence and conflict, disaster or poverty, in pursuit of a better life. Hundreds of thousands move on their own. When they encounter few opportunities to move legally, children resort to dangerous routes and engage smugglers to help them cross borders. Serious gaps in the laws, policies and services meant to protect children on the move further leave them bereft of protection and care. Deprived, unprotected, and often alone, children on the move can become easy prey for traffickers and others who abuse and exploit them.

Many children move alone and face particularly grave risks. In parts of the world, the number of children moving on their own has skyrocketed. On the dangerous Central Mediterranean Sea passage from North Africa to Europe, 92 per cent of children who arrived in Italy in 2016 and the first two months of 2017 were unaccompanied, up from 75 per cent in 2015. At least 300,000 unaccompanied and separated children moving across borders were registered in 80 countries in 2015–2016 – a near fivefold increase from 66,000 in 2010–2011. The total number of unaccompanied and separated children on the move worldwide is likely much higher.

Specific reasons motivate children to undertake journeys alone. Many seek to reunite with family members already abroad. Others pursue their families' aspirations for this generation to have a better life. Perceptions of the potential benefits of children moving, especially to certain destinations, filter through social networks. Other factors include family breakdown, domestic violence, child marriage and forced conscription.

Without safe and legal pathways, children's journeys are rife with risk and exploitation. Whatever their motivation, children often find few opportunities to move legally. Family reunification, humanitarian visas, refugee resettlement spots, and work or study visas are out of reach for most. But barriers to legal migration do not stop people from moving, they only push them underground.

Wherever families and children desperate to move encounter barriers, smuggling in human beings thrives. Smugglers range from people helping others in need for a fee to organized criminal networks that deliver children into hazardous and exploitative situations.

Once children and families place their fates in the hands of smugglers, the transaction can readily take a turn towards abuse or exploitation – especially when children and families incur debts to pay smugglers' fees. Europol estimates that 20 per cent of suspected smugglers on their radar have ties to human trafficking – they help children cross borders, only to sell them into exploitation, sometimes akin to contemporary forms of slavery.

Questioning for active reading

One of the best ways to read actively is to ask questions before, during, and after we read. These questions help us to set goals for reading, understand what we are reading, and check our understanding afterwards. When we ask questions, it is as though we are having a conversation with the writer: What do you mean here? Where did this happen? Who is involved? Why is this important? How does this relate to the refugee crisis? How did you arrive at that conclusion? When we ask questions, we read with purpose and more depth. As we read and some questions are answered, new questions will arise.

Look at Table 1.4.1. Which of these questions do you currently ask before, during, and after you read a text? Which ones do you not use that you would like to try?

Table 1.4.1 Questions that can be asked before reading, during reading, and after reading

Before Reading	During Reading	After Reading
- Why am I reading this text? What am I expected to do with or get out of this text? Do I need to answer questions? Find the main idea? Use this text in an essay? - What type of text is it? Is it an article, research paper, a blog, a tweet, a TED talk, etc? - Who is the author? What are their credentials (a person's background and qualifications)? What is the name of the publication? When was the text written? - What is the title? Are there any headings/subheadings or graphic aids (e.g., images, graphs, tables, charts) that give me clues about the topic/key points? - What do I know about the topic and how do I feel about it? - What do I think the text will teach me? - Do I have any biases about the topic because of my feelings towards it? (biases are strong opinions that make it hard to be objective)	- What key terms does the author define in the text? Are there any bold-faced, highlighted, italicized words or terms that are repeated throughout the text? - What seems to be the author's purpose or reason for writing this text? Is it to inform, persuade, or entertain? There can be more than one purpose. - Who is the author's audience? For whom did the writer compose this text, and how are they trying to appeal to their audience? (e.g., Is the text written for a history student, a psychology professor, a person's socio-economic status, political affiliation, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation?) There can be more than one audience. - What seems to be the key point(s), or what question(s) is the author trying to answer in the text? What is the thesis, message, or main idea of the text? Ask yourself: what is it mainly about? Can I find clues in the introduction and conclusion? You might scan the first paragraph or introduction and last paragraph or conclusion. - What evidence is provided to support the author's key points? Are they referring to other texts? Statistics? Examples? Other Wh-question words (who, what, when, where, why, how), - What does the author mean by X? - How does this relate to X? - Why is this X?	- What did I learn? - Is there anything that was unclear? Write down some questions that you want to answer and go back and reread difficult passages with these questions in mind. - Did I find what I needed? If not, what else do I need to know? - Did I find the author's style persuasive? Why or why not? - Do I agree with what I read? Why or why not? - How does what I read compare to other things I have read on this topic? - What ideas stuck with me? Which ones do I want to investigate more?

Asking questions as you read

Now let's take a look at an article and ask questions before, during, and after reading it:

Try this!

As you read, "Changes in U.S. Immigration Patterns and Attitudes," ask questions before, during, and after reading the text. Use the chart to help you! Create at least three WH-questions while you read. WH-questions can be fact-based ("How many undocumented immigrants live in the U.S.?") or open-ended "Why do you think that the number of undocumented immigrants has declined since 2007?").

Reading from a textbook: Changes in U.S. Immigration Patterns and Attitudes

Worldwide patterns of migration have changed, though the United States remains the most popular destination. In 2018, there were over 44.8 million immigrants living in the United States (The Pew Research Center 2018). This is more than four times the 9.7 million immigrants in the United States in 1960. In 2015, there were 12.1 million immigrants to the United States from South or East Asia, 11.6 million from Mexico, and 5.6 million from Canada or Europe. Moreover, the source countries of immigrants has changed. In 1960 the vast majority of immigrants came from Europe and Canada, but there was a large shift in during the 1970s and immigration from other parts of the world increased sharply while European and Canadian immigration declined.

While there are more foreign-born people residing in the United States legally (73% of immigrants in 2018), about 10.5 million are undocumented immigrants. This is a sharp decline from a peak of 12.2 million in 2007.

Most U.S. citizens agree that our national immigration policies are in need of change—almost three-quarters of those in a recent national survey believed undocumented immigrants should have a path to citizenship provided they meet other requirements, such as speaking English.

Works Cited

Lumen Learning, *Introduction to Sociology*, 2020.

UNICEF, "A Child is a Child: Protecting Children on the Move from Violence, Abuse and Exploitation Executive Summary." 17 May 2017.

Licenses and Attributions

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Marit ter Mate-Martinsen, Santa Barbara City College. License: CC BY NC.

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

"A Child is a Child: Protecting Children on the Move from Violence, Abuse and Exploitation" is adapted from UNICEF. License: CC BY NC.

Chart of questions for before, during, and after reading adapted from Lumen Learning, *English Composition 1*, "Questioning." License: CC BY.

"Changes in US Immigration Patterns and Attitudes" adapted from Lumen Learning, *Introduction to Sociology 20.5: Immigration in the United States*. License: CC BY.

This page titled [2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

2.4: Annotation Strategies

Questions to Consider:

- How can you prepare to take notes to maximize the effectiveness of the experience?
- What are some specific strategies you can employ for better note-taking?
- Why is annotating your notes after the note-taking session a critical step to follow?

Beyond providing a record of the information you are reading or hearing, notes help you organize the ideas and help you make meaning out of something about which you may not be familiar, so note-taking and reading are two compatible skill sets. Taking notes also helps you stay focused on the question at hand. Taking notes during presentations or class lectures may allow you to follow the speaker's main points and condense the material into a more readily usable format. Strong notes build on your prior knowledge of a subject, help you discuss trends or patterns present in the information, and direct you toward areas needing further research or reading.



Figure 4.7 Strong notes build on your prior knowledge of a subject, help you discuss trends or patterns present in the information, and direct you toward areas needing further research or reading. (Credit: Betsy Weber / Flickr Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

It is not a good habit to transcribe every single word a speaker utters—even if you have an amazing ability to do that. Most of us don't have that court-reporter-esque skill level anyway, and if we try, we would end up missing valuable information. Learn to listen for main ideas and distinguish between these main ideas and details that typically support the ideas. Include examples that explain the main ideas, but do so using understandable abbreviations.

Think of all notes as potential study guides. In fact, if you only take notes without actively working on them after the initial note-taking session, the likelihood of the notes helping you is slim. Research on this topic concludes that without active engagement after taking notes, most students forget 60–75 percent of material over which they took the notes—within two days! That sort of defeats the purpose, don't you think? This information about memory loss was first brought to light by 19th-century German psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus. Fortunately, you do have the power to thwart what is sometimes called the Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve by reinforcing what you learned through review at intervals shortly after you take in the material and frequently thereafter.

If you are a musician, you'll understand this phenomenon well. When you first attempt a difficult piece of music, you may not remember the chords and notes well at all, but after frequent practice and review, you generate a certain muscle memory and cognitive recall that allows you to play the music more easily.

Note-taking may not be the most glamorous aspect of your higher-education journey, but it is a study practice you will carry

throughout college and into your professional life. Setting yourself up for successful note-taking is almost as important as the actual taking of notes, and what you do after your note-taking session is equally significant. Well-written notes help you organize your thoughts, enhance your memory, and participate in class discussion, and they prepare you to respond successfully on exams. With all that riding on your notes, it would behoove you to learn how to take notes properly and continue to improve your note-taking skills.

Analysis Question

Do you currently have a preferred way to take notes? When did you start using it? Has it been effective? What other strategy might work for you?

Preparing to Take Notes

Preparing to take notes means more than just getting out your laptop or making sure you bring pen and paper to class. You'll do a much better job with your notes if you understand why we take notes, have a strong grasp on your preferred note-taking system, determine your specific priorities depending on your situation, and engage in some version of efficient shorthand.

Like handwriting and fingerprints, we all have unique and fiercely independent note-taking habits. These understandably and reasonably vary from one situation to the next, but you can only improve your skills by learning more about ways to take effective notes and trying different methods to find a good fit.

The very best notes are the ones you take in an organized manner that encourages frequent review and use as you progress through a topic or course of study. For this reason, you need to develop a way to organize all your notes for each class so they remain together and organized. As old-fashioned as it sounds, a clunky three-ring binder is an excellent organizational container for class notes. You can easily add to previous notes, insert handouts you may receive in class, and maintain a running collection of materials for each separate course. If the idea of carrying around a heavy binder has you rolling your eyes, then transfer that same structure into your computer files. If you don't organize your many documents into some semblance of order on your computer, you will waste significant time searching for improperly named or saved files.

You may be interested in relatively new research on what is the more effective note-taking strategy: handwriting versus typing directly into a computer. While individuals have strong personal opinions on this subject, most researchers agree that the format of student notes is less important than what students do with the notes they take afterwards. Both handwriting notes and using a computer for note-taking have pros and cons.

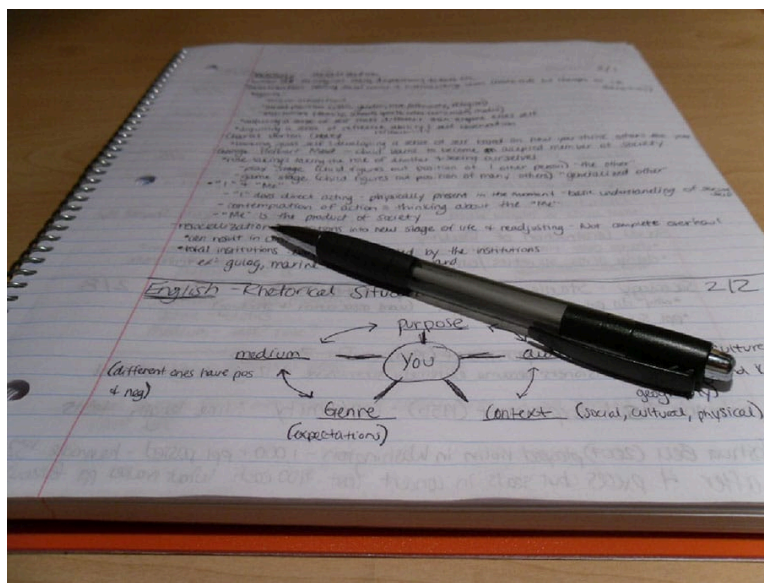


Figure 4.8 The best notes are the ones you take in an organized manner. Frequent review and further annotation are important to build a deep and useful understanding of the material. (Credit: English106 / Flickr / Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC-BY 2.0))

Managing Note-Taking Systems

Whichever of the many note-taking systems you choose (and new ones seem to come out almost daily), the very best one is the one that you will use consistently. The skill and art of note-taking is not automatic for anyone; it takes a great deal of practice, patience, and continuous attention to detail. Add to that the fact that you may need to master multiple note-taking techniques for different classes, and you have some work to do. Unless you are specifically directed by your instructor, you are free to combine the best parts of different systems if you are most comfortable with that hybrid system.

Just to keep yourself organized, all your notes should start off with an identifier, including at the very least the date, the course name, the topic of the lecture/presentation, and any other information you think will help you when you return to use the notes for further study, test preparation, or assignment completion. Additional, optional information may be the number of note-taking sessions about this topic or reminders to cross-reference class handouts, textbook pages, or other course materials. It's also always a good idea to leave some blank space in your notes so you can insert additions and questions you may have as you review the material later.

Get Connected

Staying organized is a challenge when you are juggling multiple assigned readings and lecture notes, but keeping track of what you have read and heard in lecture improves your ability to study the material and retain it. These resources can provide you with opportunities to sharpen your reading and note-taking game.

[Evernote](#) provides students with the opportunity to keep track of tasks and assignment due dates. Users can also connect to Google Calendar, share notes with others, and annotate documents. The app allows for you to access your notes on multiple devices.

[The Learning Center](#), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provides background information on an array of studying and learning techniques, beyond those listed above. For any that appeal to you or seem to apply to your fields of study, consult other material specifically focused on them.

Note-Taking Strategies

You may have a standard way you take all your notes for all your classes. When you were in high school, this one-size-fits-all approach may have worked. Now that you're in college, reading and studying more advanced topics, your general method may still work some of the time, but you should have some different strategies in place if you find that your method isn't working as well with college content. You probably will need to adopt different note-taking strategies for different subjects. The strategies in this section represent various ways to take notes in such a way that you are able to study after the initial note-taking session.

Cornell Method

One of the most recognizable note-taking systems is called the *Cornell Method*, a relatively simple way to take effective notes devised by Cornell University education professor Dr. Walter Pauk in the 1940s. In this system, you take a standard piece of note paper and divide it into three sections by drawing a horizontal line across your paper about one to two inches from the bottom of the page (the summary area) and then drawing a vertical line to separate the rest of the page above this bottom area, making the left side about two inches (the recall column) and leaving the biggest area to the right of your vertical line (the notes column). You may want to make one page and then copy as many pages as you think you'll need for any particular class, but one advantage of this system is that you can generate the sections quickly. Because you have divided up your page, you may end up using more paper than you would if you were writing on the entire page, but the point is not to keep your notes to as few pages as possible. The Cornell Method provides you with a well-organized set of notes that will help you study and review your notes as you move through the course. If you are taking notes on your computer, you can still use the Cornell Method in Word or Excel on your own or by using a template someone else created.

Academic Essay Elements	
Topic	Topic - Establishes context - Limits scope of essay - Introduces Issue/Problem
Thesis	Thesis - Central argument or point of paper - Arrives early in paper—usually toward end of first paragraph (maybe a bit later in longer papers) - Focused, clear, and specific - Reflects writer's position on the topic/issue
Supporting Details	Supporting Detail Paragraphs - Each paragraph has a specific topic - Clarify, explain, illustrate, expand on topic - Provide EVIDENCE—quotes, data, references <i>Cite everything properly!</i>
Conclusion	Conclusion - Tie back to intro/thesis - Show how details supported the argument - Why is it important? - Point to implications/outcomes, but don't introduce entirely new ideas
Use the structure, but don't follow it too rigidly. The most important pieces are a strong thesis and good evidence to back it up. The conclusion should not just summarize—take it a little further.	

Figure 4.10 This sample set of notes in the Cornell Method is designed to make sense of a large amount of information. The process of organizing the notes can help you retain the information more effectively than less consistent methods.

The main advantage of the Cornell Method is that you are setting yourself up to have organized, workable notes. The neat format helps you move into study-mode without needing to re-copy less organized notes or making sense of a large mass of information you aren't sure how to process because you can't remember key ideas or what you meant. If you write notes in your classes without any sort of system and later come across something like "Napoleon—short" in the middle of a glob of notes, what can you do at this point? Is that important? Did it connect with something relevant from the lecture? How would you possibly know? You are your best advocate for setting yourself up for success in college.

Outlining

Other note organizing systems may help you in different disciplines. You can take notes in a formal outline if you prefer, using Roman numerals for each new topic, moving down a line to capital letters indented a few spaces to the right for concepts related to the previous topic, then adding details to support the concepts indented a few more spaces over and denoted by an Arabic numeral. You can continue to add to a formal outline by following these rules.

You don't absolutely have to use the formal numerals and letter, but you have to then be careful to indent so you can tell when you move from a higher level topic to the related concepts and then to the supporting information. The main benefit of an outline is how organized it is. You have to be on your toes when you are taking notes in class to ensure you keep up the organizational format of the outline, which can be tricky if the lecture or presentation is moving quickly or covering many diverse topics.

The following formal outline example shows the basic pattern:

- I. Dogs (*main topic—usually general*)
 - A. German Shepherd (*concept related to main topic*)
 1. Protection (*supporting info about the concept*)
 2. Assertive
 3. Loyal
 - B. Weimaraner (*concept related to main topic*)
 1. Family-friendly (*supporting info about the concept*)
 2. Active
 3. Healthy
- II. Cats (*main topic*)
 - Siamese

You would just continue on with this sort of numbering and indenting format to show the connections between main ideas,

concepts, and supporting details. Whatever details you do not capture in your note-taking session, you can add after the lecture as you review your outline.

Chart or Table

Similar to creating an outline, you can develop a chart to compare and contrast main ideas in a note-taking session. Divide your paper into four or five columns with headings that include either the main topics covered in the lecture or categories such as How?, What?, When used?, Advantages/Pros, Disadvantages/Cons, or other divisions of the information. You write your notes into the appropriate columns as that information comes to light in the presentation. The table below provides an example of a table that can help you organize topics in a science course.

	Structure	Types	Functions in Body	Additional Notes
Carbohydrates				
Lipids				
Proteins				
Nucleic Acid				

Table 4.3 Example of a Chart to Organize Ideas and Categories

This format helps you pull out the salient ideas and establishes an organized set of notes to study later. (If you haven't noticed that this *reviewing later* idea is a constant across all note-taking systems, you should take note of that.) Notes by themselves that you never reference again are little more than scribbles. That would be a bit like compiling an extensive grocery list so you stay on budget when you shop, work all week on it, and then just throw it away before you get to the store. You may be able to recall a few items, but likely won't be as efficient as you could be if you had the notes to reference. Just as you cannot read all the many books, articles, and documents you need to peruse for your college classes, you cannot remember the most important ideas of all the notes you will take as part of your courses, so you must review.

Concept Mapping and Visual Note-Taking

One final note-taking method that appeals to learners who prefer a visual representation of notes is called *mapping* or sometimes *mind mapping* or *concept mapping*, although each of these names can have slightly different uses. Variations of this method abound, so you may want to look for more versions online, but the basic principles are that you are making connections between main ideas through a graphic depiction; some can get rather elaborate with colors and shapes, but a simple version may be more useful at least to begin. Main ideas can be circled or placed in a box with supporting concepts radiating off these ideas shown with a connecting line and possibly details of the support further radiating off the concepts. You can present your main ideas vertically or horizontally, but turning your paper long-ways, or in landscape mode, may prove helpful as you add more main ideas.

Shortcut symbol	Meaning
US, UK	United States, United Kingdom
info	information
Measurements: ft, in, k, m	foot, inch, thousand, million
¶	paragraph or new paragraph
Math symbols: =, +, >, <, ÷	equal, plus, greater, less, divided by
WWI, WWII	World Wars I and II
impt	important
?, !, **	denote something is very significant; don't over use

Table 4.4

See the table above for examples of common shorthand symbols and abbreviations. Do you have any other shortcuts or symbols that you use in your notes? Ask your parents if they remember any that you may be able to learn.

Annotating Notes After the Initial Note-Taking Session

Annotating notes after the initial note-taking session may be one of the most valuable study skills you can master. Whether you are highlighting, underlining, or adding additional notes, you are reinforcing the material in your mind and memory.

Admit it—who can resist highlighting markers? Gone are the days when yellow was the star of the show, and you had to be very careful not to press too firmly for fear of obliterating the words you were attempting to emphasize. Students now have a veritable rainbow of highlighting options and can color-code notes and text passages to their hearts' content.

The only reason to highlight anything is to draw attention to it, so you can easily pick out that ever-so-important information later for further study or reflection. One problem many students have is not knowing when to stop. If what you need to recall from the passage is a particularly apt and succinct definition of the term important to your discipline, highlighting the entire paragraph is less effective than highlighting just the actual term. And if you don't rein in this tendency to color long passages (possibly in multiple colors) you can end up with a whole page of highlighted text. Ironically, that is no different from a page that is not highlighted at all, so you have wasted your time. Your mantra for highlighting text should be *less is more*. Always read your text selection first before you start highlighting anything. You need to know what the overall message is before you start placing emphasis in the text with highlighting.

Another way to annotate notes after initial note-taking is underlining significant words or passages. Albeit not quite as much fun as its colorful cousin highlighting, underlining provides precision to your emphasis.

Some people think of annotations as only using a colored highlighter to mark certain words or phrases for emphasis. Actually, annotations can refer to anything you do with a text to enhance it for your particular use (either a printed text, handwritten notes, or other sort of document you are using to learn concepts). The annotations may include highlighting passages or vocabulary, defining those unfamiliar terms once you look them up, writing questions in the margin of a book, underlining or circling key terms, or otherwise marking a text for future reference. You can also annotate some electronic texts.

Realistically, you may end up doing all of these types of annotations at different times. We know that repetition in studying and reviewing is critical to learning, so you may come back to the same passage and annotate it separately. These various markings can be invaluable to you as a study guide and as a way to see the evolution of your learning about a topic. If you regularly begin a reading session writing down any questions you may have about the topic of that chapter or section and also write out answers to those questions at the end of the reading selection, you will have a good start to what that chapter covered when you eventually need to study for an exam. At that point, you likely will not have time to reread the entire selection especially if it is a long reading selection, but with strong annotations in conjunction with your class notes, you won't need to do that. With experience in reading discipline-specific texts and writing essays or taking exams in that field, you will know better what sort of questions to ask in your annotations.

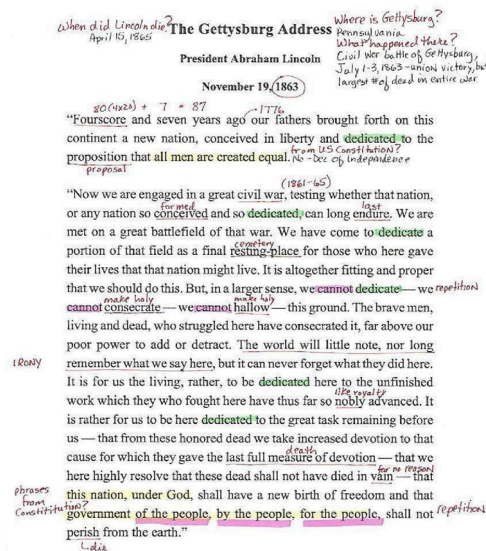


Figure 4.12 Annotations may include highlighting important topics, defining unfamiliar terms, writing questions in, underlining or circling key terms, or otherwise marking a text for future reference. Whichever approach you choose, try not to overdo it; neat, organized, and efficient notes are more effective than crowded or overdone notes.

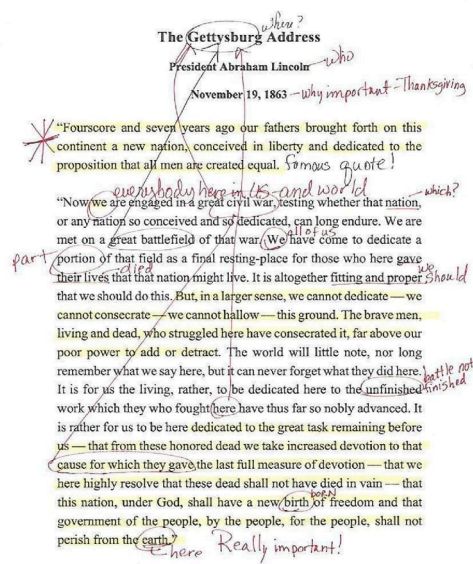


Figure 4.13 While these notes may be meaningful to the person who took them, they are neither organized nor consistent. For example, note that some of the more commonly used terms, like “we” and “unfinished,” are defined, but less common ones -- “consecrate” and “hallow” -- are not.

What you have to keep in the front of your mind while you are annotating, especially if you are going to conduct multiple annotation sessions, is to not overdo whatever method you use. Be judicious about what you annotate and how you do it on the page, which means you must be neat about it. Otherwise, you end up with a mess of either color or symbols combined with some cryptic notes that probably took you quite a long time to create, but won't be worth as much to you as a study aid as they could be. This is simply a waste of time and effort.

You cannot eat up every smidgen of white space on the page writing out questions or summaries and still have a way to read the original text. If you are lucky enough to have a blank page next to the beginning of the chapter or section you are annotating, use this, but keep in mind that when you start writing notes, you aren't exactly sure how much space you'll need. Use a decipherable shorthand and write only what you need to convey the meaning in very small print. If you are annotating your own notes, you can make a habit of using only one side of the paper in class, so that if you need to add more notes later, you could use the other

side. You can also add a blank page to your notes before beginning the next class date in your notebook so you'll end up with extra paper for annotations when you study.

Professional resources may come with annotations that can be helpful to you as you work through the various documentation requirements you'll encounter in college as well. Purdue University's Online Writing Lab ([OWL](#)) provides an annotated sample for how to format a college paper according to guidelines in the Modern Language Association (MLA) manual that you can see, along with other annotations.

Providing Needed Additional Explanations to Notes

Consider this scenario: Marlon was totally organized and ready to take notes in a designated course notebook at the beginning of every philosophy class session. He always dated his page and indicated what the topic of discussion was. He had various colored highlighters ready to denote the different note purposes he had defined: vocabulary in pink, confusing concepts in green, and note sections that would need additional explanations later in yellow. He also used his own shorthand and an impressive array of symbols to indicate questions (red question mark), highly probable test material (he used a tiny bomb exploding here), additional reading suggestions, and specific topics he would ask his instructor before the next class. Doing everything so precisely, Marlon's methods seemed like a perfect example of how to take notes for success. Inevitably though, by the end of the hour-and-a-half class session, Marlon was frantically switching between writing tools, near to tears, and scouring his notes as waves of yellow teased him with uncertainty. What went wrong?

As with many of us who try diligently to do everything we know how to do for success or what we think we know because we read books and articles on success in between our course work, Marlon is suffering from trying to do too much simultaneously. It's an honest mistake we can make when we are trying to save a little time or think we can multitask and kill two birds with one stone.

Unfortunately, this particular error in judgment can add to your stress level exponentially if you don't step back and see it for what it is. Marlon attempted to take notes in class as well as annotate his notes to get them ready for his test preparation. It was too much to do at one time, but even if he could have done all those things during class, he's missing one critical point about note-taking.

As much as we may want to hurry and get it over with, note-taking in class is just the beginning. Your instructor likely gave you a pre-class assignment to read or complete before coming to that session. The intention of that preparatory lesson is for you to come in with some level of familiarity for the topic under consideration and questions of your own. Once you're in class, you may also need to participate in a group discussion, work with your classmates, or perform some other sort of lesson-directed activity that would necessarily take you away from taking notes. Does that mean you should ignore taking notes for that day? Most likely not. You may just need to indicate in your notes that you worked on a project or whatever other in-class event you experienced that date.

Very rarely in a college classroom will you engage in an activity that is not directly related to what you are studying in that course. Even if you enjoyed every minute of the class session and it was an unusual format for that course, you still need to take some notes. Maybe your first note could be to ask yourself why you think the instructor used that unique teaching strategy for the class that day. Was it effective? Was it worth using the whole class time? How will that experience enhance what you are learning in that course?

If you use an ereader or ebooks to read texts for class or read articles from the Internet on your laptop or tablet, you can still take effective notes. Depending on the features of your device, you have many choices. Almost all electronic reading platforms allow readers to highlight and underline text. Some devices allow you to add a written text in addition to marking a word or passage that you can collect at the end of your note-taking session. Look into the specific tools for your device and learn how to use the features that allow you to take notes electronically. You can also find apps on devices to help with taking notes, some of which you may automatically have installed when you buy the product. Microsoft's OneNote, Google Keep, and the Notes feature on phones are relatively easy to use, and you may already have free access to those.

Taking Notes on Non-Text Items (i.e., Tables, Maps, Figures, etc.)

You may also encounter situations as you study and read textbooks, primary sources, and other resources for your classes that are not actually texts. You can still take notes on maps, charts, graphs, images, and tables, and your approach to these non-text features is similar to when you prepare to take notes over a passage of text. For example, if you are looking at the following map, you may immediately come up with several questions. Or it may initially appear overwhelming. Start by asking yourself these questions:

What is the main point of this map?

- Who is the intended audience?
- Where is it?
- What time period does it depict?
- What does the map's legend (the explanation of symbols) include?
- What other information do I need to make sense of this map?

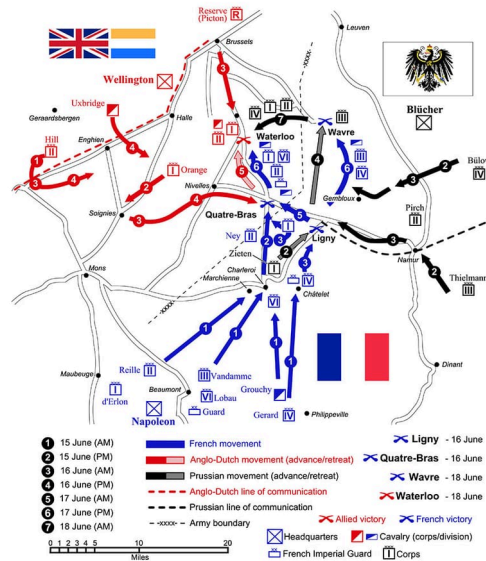


Figure 4.14 A map showing the “Order of Napoleon’s Battle of Waterloo”. Graphics, charts, graphs, and other visual items are also important to annotate. Not only do they often convey important information, but they may appear on exams or in other situations where you’ll need to use or demonstrate knowledge. (Credit: “Lpankonin” / Wikipedia Commons / Attribution 3.0 Generic (CC BY 3.0))

You may want to make an extra copy of a graphic or table before you add annotations if you are dealing with a lot of information. Making sense of all the elements will take time, and you don’t want to add to the confusion.

Returning to Your Notes

Later, as soon as possible after the class, you can go back to your notes and add in missing parts. Just as you may generate questions as you’re reading new material, you may leave a class session or lecture or activities with many questions. Write those down in a place where they won’t get lost in all your other notes.

The exact timing of when you get back to the notes you take in class or while you are reading an assignment will vary depending on how many other classes you have or what other obligations you have in your daily schedule. A good starting place that is also easy to remember is to make every effort to review your notes within 24 hours of first taking them. Longer than that and you are likely to have forgotten some key features you need to include; must less time than that, and you may not think you need to review the information you so recently wrote down, and you may postpone the task too long.

Use your phone or computer to set reminders for all your note review sessions so that it becomes a habit and you keep on top of the schedule.

Your personal notes play a significant role in your test preparation. They should enhance how you understand the lessons, textbooks, lab sessions, and assignments. All the time and effort you put into first taking the notes and then annotating and organizing the notes will be for naught if you do not formulate an effective and efficient way to use them before sectional exams or comprehensive tests.

The whole cycle of reading, note-taking in class, reviewing and enhancing your notes, and preparing for exams is part of a continuum you ideally will carry into your professional life. Don’t try to take short cuts; recognize each step in the cycle as a building block. Learning doesn’t end, which shouldn’t fill you with dread; it should help you recognize that all this work you’re

doing in the classroom and during your own study and review sessions is ongoing and cumulative. Practicing effective strategies now will help you be a stronger professional.

Activity

What resources can you find about reading and note-taking that will actually help you with these crucial skills? How do you go about deciding what resources are valuable for improving your reading and note-taking skills?

The selection and relative value of study guides and books about note-taking vary dramatically. Ask your instructors for recommendations and see what the library has available on this topic. The following list is not comprehensive, but will give you a starting point for books and articles on note-taking in college.

- ***College Rules!: How to Study, Survive, and Succeed in College***, by Sherri Nist-Olejnuk and Jodi Patrick Holschuh. More than just note-taking, this book covers many aspects of transitioning into the rigors of college life and studying.
- ***Effective Note-taking***, by Fiona McPherson. This small volume has suggestions for using your limited time wisely before, during, and after note-taking sessions.
- ***How to Study in College***, by Walter Pauk. This is the book that introduced Pauk's note-taking suggestions we now call the Cornell Method. It is a bit dated (from the 1940s), but still contains some valuable information.
- ***Learn to Listen, Listen to Learn 2: Academic Listening and Note-taking***, by Roni S. Lebauer. The main point of this book is to help students get the most from college lectures by watching for clues to lecture organization and adapting this information into strong notes.
- ***Study Skills: Do I Really Need this Stuff?*** by Steve Piscitelli. Written in a consistently down-to-earth manner, this book will help you with the foundations of strong study skills, including time management, effective note-taking, and seeing the big picture.
- "What Reading Does for the Mind", by Anne Cunningham and Keith Stanovich, 1998, <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/cunningham.pdf>
- ***How to Read a Book: The Classic Guide to Intelligent Reading***, by Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren, 1940.
- ***Short- and Long-Term Effects of a Novel on Connectivity in the Brain***, by Gregory S. Berns, Kristina Blaine, Michael J. Prietula, and Brandon E. Pye. <https://doi.org/10.1089/brain.2013.0166>

Access for free at <https://openstax.org/books/preparing-for-college-success/pages/1-introduction>

2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example

Annotation

"Annotation" means writing notes while you read, usually directly on the text you are reading. While it is common for students to highlight important information in a text, highlighting is considered a passive activity. We want to take notes as we read. Annotating is an important active reading strategy because we engage with a text as the reader. It is as though we are having a conversation with the writer. We might ask them questions, make predictions and connections, or show our agreement or disagreement. We also read a text more closely and retain it better since taking notes slows down our reading process. When it is time to write about a text or take a test, for instance, we will not need to re-read everything, and we can use our annotations instead. Each reader brings their own ideas and background "baggage" to the text, so your annotations will be different from your classmates. Reading is thinking, and like a mirror or a window as in Figure 1.5.1, annotating makes our thinking visible!



Figure 2.5.1: "Rearview mirror" by [ericklawrence](#) is marked with [CC BY 2.0](#).

Studying an example annotation

Look at the example annotation below. What observations can you make? Discuss with a partner:

Notice this!

First, read the editorial. Think about what parts are important, how the parts connect to each other, and what questions you have.

Editorial from an online magazine: "A Win for Undocumented Immigrants is a Win for All"

Guest Column by Tram Nguyen, *Virginia Mercury*, March 27, 2020

Every person in Virginia deserves to live in their community free from fear.

The exclusion of undocumented Virginians from being able to drive has been a crippling barrier to that principle. But the state legislature has now passed a bill that will allow driving for many immigrant residents through driver privilege cards this session. At New Virginia Majority we have organized and advocated for this basic right, and now previously undocumented families and communities will legally be able to drive in the state of Virginia.

Having the right to drive can be a matter of life and death under everyday circumstances: a sick child that needs immediate medical attention, or a woman getting ready to bring a new life into the world. Most of us take this access for granted. This is a crucial advancement – for those that have waited patiently just to be able to drive themselves to work, take their children to doctor's appointments, or attend local events, this a chance to become fully active members of their community.

Ovidia Castillo Rosa, a member of New Virginia Majority's Loudoun County chapter described it best: "Not having a driver's license is like not having feet. Being able to drive would be like having wings. When I have a driver's license, there are so many things that I'll have the freedom to do, including starting my own business."

Cecilia Cruz, a member of the New Virginia Majority, has been involved in the fight for the right to drive, and has called her representatives, and encouraged her friends and neighbors to march in support. "The streets will be more safe and more money will stay in the state," she said. "Families will be able to leave their children and go to work in safety, without fear."

Providing this credential will give thousands of Virginians the ability to legally drive and is a huge victory. But we recognize driver privilege cards are not the same as driver's licenses, and there is much more to be done. Our communities, in an era of open and growing institutional racism and xenophobia, understand that having a driver's privilege card has the potential to make them vulnerable, as it will make them immediately identifiable as an undocumented person and creates a segment of immigrant drivers.

Our organizers, advocates, and chapter members will continue to fight for a society that treats people equally and with dignity no matter what their status, language, zip code, gender, race, or ethnicity is, and we will work to strengthen privacy protections for all Virginians, regardless of immigration status.

When the presidential election comes to a close in the fall, we pledge to stand by immigrant communities and keep them informed of both the opportunities and threats presented by this law, regardless of who holds the office.

We believe in a Virginia that is welcoming and provides an opportunity for all its residents to succeed and live happy and healthy lives. The outcome of this legislative session was a step in the right direction and toward a more inclusive Virginia. But until all of our communities are granted the full protections and access to driver's licenses, the fight continues.

Tram Nguyen is co-executive director of New Virginia Majority, which works to builds power in working-class communities of color, in immigrant communities, among LGBTQ people, women, youth, and progressives across the commonwealth.

"A Win for Undocumented Immigrants is a Win for All" was originally published in the [Virginia Mercury](#) and is licensed under CC BY NC ND.

Now look at Figure 1.5.2, an annotation of the same text. What do you notice? What else would you add? Discuss with a partner.

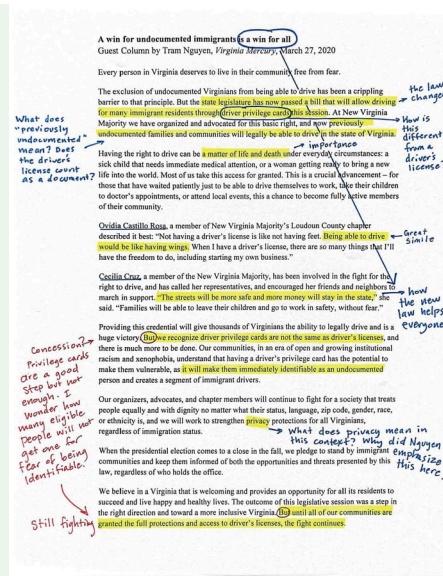


Figure 2.5.2: "Example annotation" by Gabriel Winer is licensed under CC-BY-NC. Text used verbatim from "A Win for Undocumented Immigrants is a Win for All," originally published in the [Virginia Mercury](#) and licensed under CC BY NC ND.

Figure 1.5.1 shows the text of "A Win for Undocumented Immigrants is a Win for all" by Tram Nguyen with some passages highlighted, with notes that summarize key information, ask questions, and respond to wording choices the writer made.

See [1.5.1](#) for an accessible version of the above model annotation.

Active readers use annotation as a way to

- Make predictions
- Ask questions and look for answers
- Visualize (make pictures in our mind or draw an image or diagram)
- Show agree/disagreements
- Identify problems and/or solutions
- Make connections to ourselves (our background, values, etc), other texts (articles, books, movies, etc), or the world (news events, politics, etc)
- Mark key points
- Summarize key points/ sections of the reading
- Make note of information that shocks, surprises, or challenges us and our beliefs
- Identify unfamiliar vocabulary or parts that are unclear

Some readers also like to

- underline or use symbols to point out key information
- write key words in the margin
- circle definitions and meanings
- write questions in the margins where answers can be found
- identify steps with numbers
- draw arrows to show relationships
- write short summaries in the margins

Practicing annotation

Now let's use active reading strategies and annotation with a short academic article.

Try this!

1. Use the active reading strategies to get an overview of this article.
2. Annotate as you read the article, “Undocumented Immigrants May Actually Make American Communities Safer – Not More dangerous – New Study Finds.”

Reading from an online magazine: Undocumented immigrants may actually make American communities safer – not more dangerous – new study finds

Robert M. Adelman, University at Buffalo and Lesley Reid, University of Alabama

The Research Brief is a short take about interesting academic work.

The big idea

Undocumented immigration does not increase the violent crime rate in U.S. metropolitan areas. In fact, it may reduce property crime rates. These are the key findings from our recently published article in the Journal of Crime and Justice, co-authored by Yulin Yang, James Bachmeier and Mike Maciag.

Research shows that the American communities where immigrants make their homes are more often improved by their presence than harmed by it. Immigrants bring social, cultural and economic activity to the places they live. That makes these places more vital and safer, not more dangerous.

Why it matters

People from all social groups and backgrounds commit crimes. But undocumented immigrants, and immigrants more generally, are often baselessly blamed for increasing crime rates – including, repeatedly, by President Donald Trump. In the second and final presidential debate, Trump again claimed undocumented immigrants are rapists and murderers.

This notion has existed and been studied since the early 20th century, including in a 2005 analysis we conducted with a number of colleagues that concluded immigration did not increase crime rates in U.S. metropolitan areas.

But this research is often dismissed because most empirical studies cannot separate undocumented immigrants from the total immigrant population. That level of analysis is necessary to draw conclusions about the relationship between undocumented immigration and crime.

For example, we found in a 2017 study with colleagues that from 1970 to 2010 metropolitan areas with greater concentrations of immigrants, legal and undocumented combined, have less property crime than areas with fewer immigrants, on average. Critics suggested that our findings would not hold if we looked at only the subset of undocumented individuals.

So we decided to find out if they were right. Our new study is the result of that effort, and it confirms our original findings: Undocumented immigration, on average, has no effect on violent crime across U.S. metropolitan areas.

In statistical models that did identify a significant relationship between undocumented immigration and crime, we found undocumented immigration reduces property crimes, such as burglary.

How we do our work

Using two different estimates of the undocumented immigrant populations for 154 metropolitan areas in our most recent study – one from the Pew Research Center and one from the Migration Population Institute – we examined the effect of undocumented immigration on homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary and larceny crime rates.

Crime rate data came from the FBI's Uniform Crime Report program. Other data were from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Using a statistical method called regression analysis to examine the data, we found that as the size of the undocumented population increases, the property crime rate decreases, on average. And the size of the undocumented population in a metropolitan area tends to have no impact on the violent crime rate.

These findings build on the conclusions of a large 2018 study in which researchers Graham Ousey and Charis Kubrin examined 51 studies on immigration and crime published from 1994 to 2014.

What still isn't known

Our analyses looked at broad metropolitan patterns, not the relationship of undocumented immigration and crime rates in distinct, specific places such as New York City and Los Angeles. Nor does our study address the reasons that immigration reduces crime, although there is plenty of other scholarship on that issue.

Robert M. Adelman, Associate Professor and Department Chair of Sociology, *University at Buffalo* and Lesley Reid, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Interim Dean of the School of Social Work, *University of Alabama*

This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

Reflect on your annotations

Discuss your annotations with a partner or in small groups. What observations can you make? What worked well? What was confusing? In what way did your annotations reinforce your learning? What kinds of annotations did you apply the most from the list below? Which types of annotations did you not try? Why do you think that is? What do you plan to do differently when you annotate again?

- Make predictions
- Ask questions and look for answers
- Visualize (make pictures in your mind or draw an image or diagram)
- Show agreements or disagreements
- Identify problems and/or solutions
- Make connections to yourself (your background, values, etc), other texts (articles, books, movies, etc), or the world (news events, politics, etc)
- Mark key points
- Summarize key points or sections of the reading
- Make note of information that shocks, surprises, or challenges you and your beliefs
- Identify parts that are unclear

Works Cited

Adelman, Robert M. and Lesley Reid. "Undocumented Immigrants May Actually Make American Communities Safer – Not More Dangerous – New Study Finds." *The Conversation*, 27 Oct. 2020

Licenses and Attributions

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Marit ter Mate-Martinsen, Santa Barbara City College. License: CC BY NC.

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

"A Win for Undocumented Immigrants is a Win for All" was originally published in the [Virginia Mercury](#) and is licensed under CC BY NC ND.

"Undocumented Immigrants May Actually Make American Communities Safer – Not More Dangerous – New Study Finds" by Robert M. Adelman and Lesley Reid. License: CC BY ND.

This page titled [2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing

Exploring paraphrasing and summarizing

Let's explore paraphrasing and summarizing in an article about DACA recipients or "Dreamers". Figure 1.8.1 shows a young woman protesting in support of DACA.



Figure 2.6.1: "DACA protest" by vpickering is marked with CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Look at the example quotation, paraphrase, and summary from the article "What the Supreme Court's DACA Ruling Means for Undocumented Students and the Colleges and Universities They Attend, Today" in Table 1.8.1 below. What similarities do you notice between the quotation, paraphrase, and summary? What differences do you observe?

Table 1.8.1 Table comparing a quotation, paraphrase and summary of an article

Quotation	Paraphrase	Summary
In The Conversation's "What the Supreme Court's DACA Ruling Means for Undocumented Students and the Colleges and Universities They Attend, Today," Sayil Camacho states, "an estimated 1.1 million undocumented children live in the United States, according to data drawn from the Census Bureau. This number includes about 100,000 undocumented students who graduate from high school every year. The most recent estimates indicate that approximately 450,000 undocumented immigrants are enrolled in colleges and universities, including some 45,000 pursuing advanced degrees."	In The Conversation's "What the Supreme Court's DACA Ruling Means for Undocumented Students and the Colleges and Universities They Attend, Today," Sayil Camacho states that over a million children are in the United States without legal papers. The latest data that was collected by the Census Bureau also shows that almost half a million undergraduate students in higher education are undocumented. Furthermore, this number includes 45,000 students who are enrolled in graduate school.	In The Conversation's "What the Supreme Court's DACA Ruling Means for Undocumented Students and the Colleges and Universities They Attend, Today," Sayil Camacho shares that a large number of children (about 1.1 million) are in the U.S. without legal papers of which 100,000 are in high school, 450,000 in college and 45,000 in graduate school.

Now, check the following list. Did you observe all the similarities and differences?

Similarities:

- Quotations, paraphrases, and summaries all use reporting words to refer to the source.
- Quotations, paraphrases, and summaries all report ideas from the original text.
- Paraphrases and summaries both report ideas from the original text, but change the words and sentence structure.

Differences:

- Quotations use the same exact words from the original text, unlike paraphrases and summaries.
- Quotations use quotation marks "..." to show which words are copied directly.
- Summaries are shorter than the original passage, while quotations and paraphrases are closer to the same length as the original.

Paraphrasing

We can paraphrase a passage to show our comprehension and the meaning of a text. In essays, we might use a paraphrase to provide support for the point we are making. When we paraphrase, we capture what the text says.

With a paraphrase we:

- Keep the length similar to the text we are paraphrasing
- Use our own words - they should be different from the text (unless a key term is of essence)
- Keep the meaning the same as the original text - we do not include our opinion
- Use a different sentence structure - change up the grammar!
- Need to reference the writer's name and title of the text.

Summarizing

We can also demonstrate our understanding of a text by writing a summary. A summary can be short or long, but it is always significantly shorter than the original text. We might be asked to summarize a whole text or a particular point in a text, and we may have to summarize a text or passage in a sentence, a paragraph, a page, or even a whole essay.

Examine the elements of a strong summary:

- Starts with an introductory sentence that lists the title of the text, author and the main idea (thesis) restated in your own words

Example: In "Title," author states that.... (or choose a different verb, for example, claims, explains, defends, insists, asserts, compares, warns, observes, condemns, suggests, refutes, shows, or acknowledges. See the [Chapter 4 Language Toolkit](#) to learn more about reporting verbs).

- Uses your own words to express
- Condenses the text: it is significantly shorter than the original text
- Gives an overview of the text
- Accurately captures the key/main points of the original text and ignores most of the details, examples, illustrations or explanations.
- Only contains the ideas of the original text (not our own opinion)
- Uses academic conventions (e.g., avoid *you,* contractions such as isn't - use is not instead - and qualifiers like really / very) + use the writer's last name after you've introduced them by their full name
- Looks like a paragraph
- Makes sense - connect points with transition words, for instance

To summarize, consider doing the following:

1. Preview the text
2. Annotate it
3. Look for the main idea (thesis)
4. Write a 1-sentence summary for each paragraph in your own words

5. Write a sentence that summarizes the whole text in your own words
6. Order key points in a way that makes sense
7. Connect the points with transition words
8. Avoid repetition

Summarizing to help you read

Let's try summarizing an article from this chapter.

Try this!

1. Choose a text from this chapter, for example, "[Undocumented Immigrants May Actually Make American Communities Safer – Not More dangerous – New Study Finds](#)" by Robert M. Adelman and Lesley Reid in 1.4.
2. Write notes to prepare to summarize the reading:
 1. Author and title:
 2. Main idea:
 3. 1-3 supporting details:
3. Use your notes to write a summary in 5 sentences or less.
4. Compare your summary to your classmates. What similarities and/or differences do you notice?
5. As a fun challenge, try to condense your summary to 25 words (not including author's name and title). You can do this individually or as a whole group.
6. Reflect on the experience condensing an article to 25 words. Was this hard to do? Why or why not?

Licenses and Attribution

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Marit ter Mate-Martinsen, Santa Barbara City College. License: CC BY NC.

This page titled [2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

3: Exploring the Writing Process

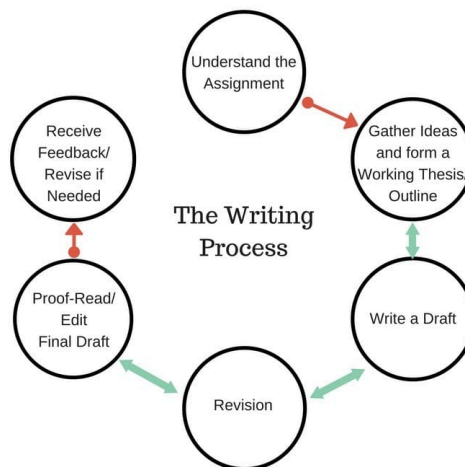
What is The Writing Process?

Donald M. Murray, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist and educator, presented his important article, “Teach Writing as a Process Not Product,” in 1972. In the article, he explains why writing is an ongoing process:

[The writing process] is the process of discovery through language. It is the process of exploration of what we know and what we feel about what we know through language. It is the process of using language to learn about our world, to evaluate what we learn about our world, to communicate what we learn about our world. Instead of teaching finished writing, we should teach unfinished writing, and glory in its unfinishedness. (4)

You will find that many college writing instructors have answered Murray’s call to “teach writing as a process” and due to shifting our focus on process rather than product, you will find yourself spending a lot of time brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing. Embracing writing as a process helps apprehensive writers see that writing is not only about grammatical accuracy or “being a good writer.”

The Writing Process



“The Writing Process” image was created by Sarah M. Lacy

The most important lesson to understand about the writing process, is that it is recursive, meaning that you need to move back and forth between some or all of the steps; there are many ways to approach this process. Allowing yourself enough time to begin the assignment before it is due, will give you time to move from one step to the other, and back as needed. Perhaps the easiest way to think about this process is as a series of steps that you can move from one to the other and back again.

The Writing Process in 6 Steps

The following steps have been adapted from the work of Paul Eschholz and Alfred Rosa, found in their book *Subject & Strategy*. The authors focus on discussing writing as a series of steps that can be adapted to meet any writer’s needs; below, the steps have been modified to fit your needs as first-year writers. While reading through the steps below, remember that every writer has a unique approach to the writing process. The steps are presented in such a way that allow for any writer to understand the process as a whole, so that they can feel prepared when beginning a paper. Take special note of all the tips and guidance presented with each step, as well as suggested further reading, remembering that writing is a skill that needs practice: make sure to spend time developing your own connection to each step when writing a paper. You can also watch an introductory video on the steps:

The detailed steps are as follows:

Step 1 – Understand the Assignment

Always read over the entire assignment sheet provided to you by your instructor. Think of this sheet as a contract; by accepting the sheet, you are agreeing to follow all guidelines and requirements that have been provided. This sheet is a direct communication from your instructor to you, laying out every expectation and requirement of an assignment. Follow each to ensure you are conducting and completing the assignment properly.

See [Section 3.2](#) for a closer look at how to use an assignment sheet.

Step 2 – Gather Ideas and Form Working Thesis

Once you understand the assignment, you will need to collect information in order to understand your topic, and decide where you would like the paper to lead. This step can be conducted in various ways. Researching to build content knowledge is always a good place to start this step, so make sure to check out [Chapter 8: The Research Process](#) for a more specified look at various research methods.

After you have conducted some research begin brainstorming. You can do this in a variety of ways:

- Free Writing
- Listing ideas
- Generate a list of questions
- Clustering/ Mapping (creating a bubble chart)
- Create a basic outline

Then, you will want to formulate a **Working Thesis**. A working thesis is different than the **thesis** found in a **final draft**: it will not be specific nor as narrowed. Think of a working thesis as the general focus of the paper, helping to shape your research and brainstorming activities. As you will later spend ample time working and re-working a draft, allow yourself the freedom to revise this thesis as you become more familiar with your topic and purpose.

See [Section 4.2: Creating a Thesis](#) for more information on thesis statements.

Step 3 – Write a Draft

After completing Steps 1 and 2, you are ready to begin putting all parts and ideas together into a full length draft. It is important to remember that this is a first/rough draft, and the goal is to get all of your thoughts into writing, not generating a *perfect* draft. Do not get hung up with your language at this point, focus on the larger ideas and content.

Organization is a very important part of this step, and if you have not already composed an outline during Step 2, consider writing one now. The purpose of an outline is to create a logical flow of claims, evidence, and links before or during the drafting process; experiment with outlines to learn when and how they can work for you.

Outlines are great at helping you organize your outside sources, if you need to use some within a particular assignment. Start by generating a list of claims (or main ideas) to support your thesis, and decide which source belongs with each idea, knowing that you may (and should) use your sources more than once, with more than one claim.

Step 4 – Revise the Draft(s)

This is the step in which you are likely to spend the majority of your time. This section is different from simply “editing” or “proof reading” because you are looking for larger context issues; for example, this is when you need to check your topic sentences and transitions, make sure each claim matches the thesis statement, and so on. Return to Steps 1 and 2 as needed, to ensure you are on the right track and your draft is properly adhering to the guidelines of the assignment.

The revision portion of the writing process is also where you will need to make sure all of your paragraphs are fully developed as appropriate for the assignment. If you need to have outside sources present, this is when you will make sure that all are working properly together. If the assignment is a summary, this is when you will need to double check all paraphrasing to make sure it

correctly represents the ideas and information of the source text.

It is likely that your professor will instruct you to complete Peer Editing. Learn more about this process in [Section 3.4](#).

Step 5 – Proof-Read/Edit the Draft(s)

Once the larger content issues have been resolved and you are moving towards a final draft, work through the paper looking for grammar and style issues. This step is when you need to make sure that your tone is appropriate for the assignment (for example, you will need to make sure you have remained in a formal tone for all academic papers), that sources are properly integrated into your own work if your assignment calls for them, etc. Consider using the checklist offered in [Section 3.6](#).

When entering the final step, go back to the assignment sheet, read it over once more in full, and then conduct a close reading. Doing this will help you to ensure you have completed all components of the assignment as per your instructor's guidance.

Step 6 – Turn in the Draft, Receive Feedback, and Revise (if needed)

Once your draft is completed, turned in, and handed back with edits from your instructor, you may have an opportunity to revise, and turn in again to help raise your grade. As the goal of the any first year writing class is to improve your writing, this is an essential step to consider so that you get the most out of the course. Ask your instructor for more detail.

Works Cited

Eschholz, Paul and Alfred Rosa. *Subject & Strategy: A Writer's Reader*. 11th ed., Bedford/St. Martin, 2007.

[1st Edition: A Guide to Rhetoric, Genre, and Success in First-Year Writing \(No Longer Updated\)](#) by Sarah M. Lacy and Melanie Gagich is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted. Remixed by Talley Caruso (2025). The original version can be accessed for free at <https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/csu-fyw-rhetoric/chapter/3-1-eng-100-101-writing-process/>

4: PLANNING YOUR WRITING

4.1: Understanding the Assignment

4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text

4.3: Brainstorming

4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims

4.1: Understanding the Assignment

Before you begin working on an essay or a writing assignment, don't forget to spend some quality time analyzing the assignment sheet. By closely reading and breaking down the assignment sheet, you are setting yourself up for an easier time of planning and composing the assignment.

Understanding what you need to do

- **First**, carefully read the assignment sheet and search for the required page length, due dates, and other submission-based information.
- **Second**, determine the genre of the assignment
- **Third**, identify the core assignment questions that you need to answer
- **Fourth**, locate the evaluation and grading criteria

Writing Genre

What, in the broadest sense, are you being asked to do? What writing genre is expected?

- **Analysis** – Analysis questions often contain words like *how*, *in what ways*, *what are some of the ____*. Analysis asks you to examine small pieces of the larger whole and indicate what their meaning or significance is
- **Synthesis** – If you are asked to draw from and connect several different sources, then you will be synthesizing
- **Explanation** – Any text in which you merely report (as opposed to attempting to persuade) is going to be an explanation paper. None of your own opinion is being sought. Summaries, annotations, and reports are often explanatory
- **Argument** – Any text in which you are attempting to get a reader to accept your claim. Argument is persuasive writing, and it can include things like argument based research papers or critiques/evaluations of others' work.

How to Answer the Assignment Question/s

Sometimes, a list of prompts or questions may appear with an assignment. It is likely that your instructor will not expect you to answer all of the questions listed. They are simply offering you some ideas so that you can think of your own questions to ask.

- Circle all assignment questions that you see on the assignment sheet
- Put a star next to the question that is either the most important OR that you will pursue in creating the assignment

Recognizing Implied Questions

A prompt may not include a clear 'how' or 'why' question, though one is always implied by the language of the prompt. For example:

“Discuss the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act on special education programs” is asking you to write *how* the act has affected special education programs.

“Consider the recent rise of autism diagnoses” is asking you to write *why* the diagnoses of autism are on the rise.

Identifying Writing Requirements

Some instructors offer indications of what certain parts of the essay/composition should contain. Does the assignment sheet offer suggestions or requirements for the Intro paragraph? For the thesis statement? For the structure or content of the body paragraphs or conclusion paragraphs?

Identifying Evaluation Criteria

Many assignment sheets contain a grading rubric or some other indication of evaluation criteria for the assignment. You can use these criteria to both begin the writing process and to guide your revision and editing process. If you do not see any rubric or evaluation criteria on the assignment sheet — ask!

Recognizing Disciplinary Expectations

Depending on the discipline in which you are writing, different features and formats of your writing may be expected. Always look closely at key terms and vocabulary in the writing assignment, and be sure to note what type of evidence and citations style your instructor expects.

- does the essay need to be in MLA, APA, CMS or another style?
- does the professor require any specific submission elements or formats?

[3.3 Understanding the Writing Assignment](#) by Robin Jeffrey, Emilie Zickel is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted. Access for free at <https://pressbooks.ulib.csuohio.edu/csu-fyw-rhetoric/chapter/understanding-assignments/>

4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text

What makes a quotation powerful?

Think of a song, video, visual, piece of writing, performance, artwork, speech, etc. that is powerful, moving, or meaningful to you. Why do you find this “text” powerful, moving, or meaningful?

Choosing a powerful quotation

Now, let's look at an article from a textbook about DACA recipients or Dreamers, as shown in Figure 1.9.1.



Figure 4.2.1: "Defend DACA" by Molly Adams via Flickr is licensed under CC BY 2.0

Try this!

Next read an excerpt on young immigrant DACA recipients (Dreamers) from a sociology textbook. As you read, choose a phrase, sentence, or a group of sentences that speaks to you. It should be something that is meaningful, surprising, or thought provoking.

Reading from a sociology textbook: "The Dreamers" by Erika Gutierrez, et al.

On June 15, 2012 President Barack Obama issued a new law known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) that allowed some individuals who were brought to the United States without legal papers as children to apply for a renewable two-year period of deferred action from deportation and to become eligible for a work permit in the United States. Recipients cannot have a criminal record and would not be able to become official U.S. citizens through this policy new law. This was a major victory for a young generation of activists dubbed Dreamers, after the failed DREAM Act (2001) which would have provided paths to citizenship through two years of military service or 2 years of college education. Though the policy did not apply to all who were brought as children the Migration Policy Institute estimates that over 1.3 million people qualified. As of March 2020, there are 643,560 DACA recipients who at least temporarily have some sense of stability and opportunity that they did not have previously.

DACA would not have been possible if it weren't for the brave young organizers and activists, such as Jose Antonio Vargas, and the organizations who created spaces for young undocumented people to share their stories and realize that they were not alone (see figure 1.8.1). They learned that there was nothing to be ashamed of. They also learned that sticking together as a group allowed them to call for equal rights" (Nicholls, 2014). For this subgroup of undocumented immigrants, the narrative was convincing: they were socialized in U.S. schools, were not familiar with any other country, they played by the rules, and therefore had the right to pursue the American dream.

According to a June 2020 Pew survey, 74% of Americans support granting legal status to immigrants who were brought to the U.S. without legal papers as children, but on September 5, 2017, President Trump announced an end to DACA (Edelman, 2017). Then Attorney General Jeff Sessions criticized DACA and claimed that it "denied jobs to hundreds of thousands of Americans by allowing those same jobs to go to illegal aliens." This announcement sent the hundreds of thousands of DACA recipients into panic-mode as their futures were uncertain yet again. Luckily for them, on June 18, 2020 the Supreme Court ruled that the way DACA was ended was unlawful. Most recently, on December 4th, 2020, a federal judge ordered a full restoration of DACA which means that first-time applicants will be accepted.

Responding to a quotation

What quote did you choose? Why does this sentence or group of sentences speak to you? Why is it meaningful, surprising, or thought-provoking to you? How might it connect to you (e.g., your experiences, values, beliefs), other texts (e.g., books, movies, articles), or the world (current news events, politics).

Write your answer using one of these sentence frames:

- When I read, "X" (Gutierrez et al), I wondered if Y.
- When I read, "X" (Gutierrez et al), I thought about Y.
- I chose: "X" (Gutierrez et al). My question is, Y?
- I chose: "X" (Gutierrez et al). I made a connection with Y.
- I chose, "X" (Gutierrez et al) because Y.

Analyzing a text

What is analysis?

When you responded to the quotation, you practiced analyzing a text. To analyze something means to study it carefully with the purpose of understanding it more deeply.

Now if you had to choose an example of analysis, what would you choose? A tweet, a TikTok video, a book or movie review, a podcast, a DIY video, a meme, or a hip hop song? If you answered "all," you are right again! Analysis is something that we do every day. It is not just an academic skill. We use it inside and outside the classroom.

When we are asked to analyze a piece of text, we want to explain the significance of it: what is the deeper meaning? Why does it matter?

We might:

- ask questions
- make predictions
- draw conclusions
- identify problems and propose solutions
- make connections (text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world)
- discuss opinions
- agree/disagree

In academic writing, we might do the same kinds of thinking as we did above in [Responding to a quotation](#). However, the sentences we write for analysis are usually more in the third person, and they usually don't directly talk about our experience as readers.

Compare these two ways of starting sentences:

Informal response:

- I chose this quote because I think...
- This story reminds me of...
- I wonder why...

Formal analysis:

- This situation is similar to...
- Because of the impact of X,...
- Here, the author seems to imply that...

Analysis example

Now let's look at an analysis of a quotation.

Notice This!

Read this quotation from a text about Dreamers as well as an analysis. As you read, think about these questions:

- Which is longer, the quotation or the analysis?
- In the analysis, how does the writer connect to their own knowledge, other texts, or the world?

Quotation

In "The Dreamers", Erika Gutierrez et al. state that, "DACA would not have been possible if it weren't for the brave young organizers and activists, such as Jose Antonio Vargas, and the organizations who created spaces for young undocumented people to share their stories and realize that they were not alone."

Analysis

As Gutierrez, et al. emphasize, it is critical that youth hear the voices of other immigrants who came to the U.S. without legal papers, so they feel comfortable to share their stories and demand change. In addition to Vargas, another courageous advocate is Reyna Grande. She wrote several books about her life because she could not find any books that told her story, she wanted other undocumented immigrants to know they are not alone, and her goal was to inspire them to follow their dreams. Grande also published a letter in *The New York Times* in response to a comment that Ivanka Trump made blaming the parents for the family separation at the U.S.-Mexican border. Grande shared how her father made the difficult decision to leave for the U.S. when Grande was two to give her family a better life, and that she had to beg her father to bring her with him at the age of nine. Grande pointed out that pathways are needed for migrant families to receive asylum, and that countries like Mexico should receive foreign aid to stimulate the economy. Writers like Jose Antonio Vargas and Reyna Grande have used their voices to advocate for change, and they are educating others on the injustices faced by undocumented immigrants.

Writing your own analysis

Let's practice analyzing a quotation:

Try this!

Choose one of these two quotations from "The Dreamers":

- "For this subgroup of undocumented immigrants, the narrative was compelling convincing: they were socialized in U.S. schools, were not familiar with any other country, they played by the rules, and therefore had the right to pursue the American dream."

- "According to a June 2020 Pew survey, 74% of Americans support granting legal status to immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally without legal papers as children, but on September 5, 2017, President Trump announced an end to DACA" (Edelman 2017).

Now, write a paragraph of your own analysis.

Analyzing a reading response journal

This chapter started with a [Sample Reading Response Journal - an Undocumented Teacher's Story](#). Now that you have learned about analyzing text, let's return to that reading response journal.

Notice this!

Read the narrative and reading response journal on this page: [Sample Reading Response Journal- an Undocumented Teacher's Story](#). Then, discuss the following questions with a classmate.

1. Which of the four responses are most interesting to you? Why?
2. Which of these methods of analysis did the journal writer use in each of the four entries?
 - ask questions
 - make predictions
 - draw conclusions
 - identify problems and propose solutions
 - make connections (text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world)
 - discuss opinions
 - agree/disagree
3. Does the journal writer use the author's first name, last name, or both in the responses?
4. What reporting verbs does the journal writer use? (See [4.10: Language Toolkit](#) for more on reporting verbs.)
5. Can you find examples of quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, and analysis in the four entries? Which does the journal writer use most? Why did the journal writer decide to use short quotations for certain phrases or sentences instead of just paraphrasing them?
6. Can you find examples of square brackets ([]) and ellipses (. . .) in the journals? Why did the writer use these? (See [4.10: Language Toolkit](#) for more on square brackets and ellipses.)
7. In entry 2, the journal writer uses a quotation that includes the phrase "Gifted and Talented". How do they change the quotation marks to show that this is a quotation within a quotation?
8. In entry 2, when does the journal writer use present tense and when do they use past tense?
9. In entry 4, how does the journal writer change the pronouns "me", "my", and "myself" in the quotation? Why do they do this?
10. How could you use this example to help you with your own textual analyses?

Works Cited

Gutierrez, Erika et al. "Social Change and Resistance." *Race and Ethnic Relations in the U.S.: An Intersectional Approach*. Libretext: 2021.

Licenses and Attributions

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Marit ter Mate-Martinsen, Santa Barbara City College. License: CC BY NC.

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

"The Dreamers" reading is adapted from "[3.5 Social Change and Resistance](#)" by Erika Gutierrez, et al. License: CC BY NC.

This page titled [4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

4.3: Brainstorming

Brainstorming ideas for your paper can feel challenging.

You might have too many ideas or feel unsure if you have enough to write a complete essay.

Use the table below to help you organize your thoughts and identify the strongest ideas to support your writing.

How to use the below table to organize your ideas

- Start by finding examples or evidence from the chosen text(s). Indicate the specific page number(s) where you found the information.
- Organize your examples so they support a single main idea (A, B, C, D). Each **Main Idea** will become a **Supporting Paragraph** in your essay.
- This outline provides space for up to **4 Main Ideas**, with room for **3 examples per idea**. Use it to brainstorm and organize your thoughts clearly.
- Each Supporting Paragraph should include **at least two pieces of evidence or examples** from the text(s).
- Brainstorm more than you need—then choose your best ideas to develop!

Thesis (connects the main ideas):			
<u>Main Idea A (supports thesis):</u>	<u>Main Idea B (supports thesis):</u>	<u>Main Idea C (supports thesis):</u>	<u>Main Idea D (supports thesis):</u>
• Example A1:	• Example B1:	• Example C1:	• Example D1:
• Example A2:	• Example B2:	• Example C2:	• Example D2:
• Example A3:	• Example B3:	• Example C3:	• Example D3:
Concluding Idea (reword the main idea and then add an insight to it):			

4.3 Brainstorming, by Talley Caruso, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License CC BY.

This page titled [4.3: Brainstorming](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims

Supporting claims with evidence

In any essay or research paper that you write, you will make claims about your topic, and support your claims with evidence. This evidence shows the reader why you came to the conclusions that you are presenting.

The types of support you develop and include in an essay will depend on what you are writing and why you are writing. For example, if you are writing a reflective or response essay, you will use more of your own personal experiences, observations, and examples. On the other hand, if you are writing a research paper, you will rely on quotations, reasons, and facts. If you do use personal experience or observations, those should be additional support for points that are already supported by your research.

Types of evidence

Here are examples of the main types of evidence or support used in academic writing:

- **General Facts** (with a citation if this was learned through research): Some parents believe that it is more important to learn the new language of the new country where they live (Brown 31).
- **Statistics** (facts that rely on numbers) (with a citation): More than ten percent of children in the US public school system are not native speakers of English (Mata-McMahon).
- **Quotations or paraphrases from experts** (with a citation): Catherine Snow, Professor of Education at Harvard University, insists that "[i]t's ironic that we have students walking up staircases at one end of their school building to attend Spanish foreign language classes while at the other end of the same building native Spanish speakers are being taught English and content in ways that lead to their loss of Spanish."
- **Examples** (with a citation if this was learned through research): As a Korean immigrant father named Mr. Rhee explains, his family "spen[t] a whole summer in Korea last year. Henry was 5 years old. . . . We just sent him to a local kindergarten there, so that he could meet and make friends with Korean kids around his age. His Korean was improved a lot during that time period" (qtd. in Kang 435).
- **Personal Experience or Observations**: It was easy for my cousins who were born in Switzerland to learn Portuguese because there is a large Portuguese community there. In contrast, my niece is growing up in the United States and I am her only Portuguese-speaking relative. Consequently, she understands almost everything, but she cannot speak Portuguese.

Recognizing evidence

Let's look at a paragraph from a paper on heritage languages and see what evidence the writer uses:

Notice this!

What types of evidence do you see in this example paragraph?

On the other hand, unfortunately, some immigrant do not prioritize teaching their children their home language. Clara Lee Brown, an associate professor of the College of Education, Health and Human Sciences, at the University of Tennessee, claims that some parents believe that it is more important to learn the new language of the new country where they live. So, they speak that language at home in the hope that children will learn this new language faster (Brown 31). However, it is important to also consider the fact that "second-generation children who are fluently bilingual performed better on academic tests and had better GPAs compared to monolinguals..." (San Diego, Rumbaut & Cornelius qtd. in Tran 261). Additionally, many children refuse to speak their heritage language when they grew up, and frequently just the oldest child speaks the native language whereas younger siblings start to communicate with each other in the new language and do not master home language. Thus, parents should motivate children to learn their heritage language making them feel proud of their culture.

Using different types of evidence

Let's try adding evidence from an article about bilingual education, such as in the classroom in figure 4.3.1, to a body paragraph.



Figure 4.4.1: "Bilingual Classroom Tour and Presentation" by One America is licensed under [CC-BY-NC-SA](#)

Try this!

1. Read this short article and look for different kinds of evidence to support this topic sentence: "Public schools should help immigrant children to maintain their heritage language."
2. Choose one fact that can be used to support the topic sentence. Paraphrase it and write it down with a correct citation.
3. Choose one quotation from an expert or statistic that can be used to support the topic sentence. Write it down with a correct citation.
4. Think about if you have any personal experiences or observations related to this topic, or if you know of an example. If you do, write it down.
5. Write a concluding explanation of how this evidence supports the topic sentence.
6. Check the sample body paragraph. How similar or different is it to your paragraph?

Reading from an online magazine: 1 in 10 US students are English learners

Jennifer Mata-McMahon, *University of Maryland, Baltimore County*

More than 1 in 10 of the nation's approximately 50 million public school students speak a native language other than English, according to the latest federal data. Roughly 3 in 4 of these English learners speak Spanish.

The percentage of U.S. students who are learning how to speak English has grown significantly in recent years, rising from 8% in fall of 2000 to 10% by 2017, the data indicate.

The prevalence of these students varies greatly across the country, ranging from 0.8% in West Virginia to 19.2% in California. The share of English learners is highest among young children, hovering around 16% between kindergarten and second grade. Typically, younger children have less exposure than older students to English because they are primarily communicating with relatives in their native languages. By the time students are nearing high school graduation, the percentage of English learners drops to 4.6%.

Students who remain fluent in their native language while learning to speak English become bilingual, which has many advantages. Bilingual people tend to be better at connecting with others from different ethnic backgrounds and cultures. They are also better at solving problems.

Once they grow up, bilingual adults often have better job opportunities and may earn higher salaries than those who no longer speak their native language. Also, research indicates that being bilingual can increase creativity and heighten cognitive ability.

Researchers have found that attending dual-language programs, where instructional time is split between English and another language (oftentimes Spanish), attended by both native and non-native English speakers, help children become bilingual. But only 35 states offered these programs, according to the Department of Education's latest data.

Without those opportunities, English learners tend to stop being fluent in their first language when they reach high school and miss out on all the benefits of becoming bilingual students.

This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

(To see a sample body paragraph, check [4.12: Integrating Evidence Answer Key](#))

Works Cited

Brown, Clara Lee. "Maintaining Heritage Language: Perspectives of Korean Parents." *Multicultural Education*, vol. 19, no. 1, Fall 2011, pp. 31-37. Eric.ed.gov.

Kang, Hyun-Sook. "Korean-Immigrant Parents' Support of Their American-Born Children's Development and Maintenance of the Home Language." *Early Childhood Education Journal*, vol. 41, no. 6, Nov. 2013, pp. 431-438. EBSCOhost.

Mata-McMahon, Jennifer. "[1 In 10 US Students Are English Learners](#)." *The Conversation*, 28 Oct. 2021.

Snow, Catherine. "[The True Failure of Foreign Language Instruction](#)." *The Conversation*, 24 Mar. 2021.

Tran, Van C. "English Gain Vs. Spanish Loss? Language Assimilation among Second-Generation Latinos in Young Adulthood." *Social Forces*, vol. 89, no. 1, Sept. 2010, pp. 257-284. EBSCOhost.

Licenses and Attributions

Authored by Annie Agard and Elizabeth Wadell, Laney College. License: CC BY NC.

Body paragraph on heritage languages and examples of fact, example, and personal experience are from "Heritage Languages: the Language of Emotions", a research paper by Joana Coelho Silverio. License: CC BY.

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

"Supporting Claims with Evidence" and some of the types of evidence are adapted from [6.2 "Types of Support"](#) in the text *Writing, Reading, and College Success: A First-Year Composition Course for All Learners*. License: CC BY NC SA.

"[1 in 10 US Students are English Learners](#)" is reprinted from *The Conversation*. License: CC BY ND.

This page titled [4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

5: WRITING THE FIRST DRAFT

5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement

5.1.1: Parallel Structure

5.2: Essay Introductions

5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs

5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph

5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement

Why thesis statements are important

A thesis statement is one sentence that gives the main idea of your essay.

Have you ever listened to or read something with a lot of examples and felt confused about the main point? That is what it is like to read an essay without a thesis statement. You get confused about how everything fits together. However, once you know the overall point a writer is trying to make you can understand how everything connects together.

Figure 5.1.1 shows a physical signpost.



Figure 5.1.1: Signpost by Andrew Tarrant (CC BY NC; author via Flickr)

Noticing organization

Let's look at some sample passages and see which is easier to understand.

Notice this!

Which is easier to understand? Why?

- I thought that students in the United States went to school with cheerleaders and football players like on television. On the other hand, when I met students in the US, they asked me if I rode a camel to school in Kuwait.
- When I came to the United States, I realized that both my new classmates and I had stereotypes about each other based on limited information we had gotten in the media. I thought that students in the United States went to school with cheerleaders and football players like on television. On the other hand, when I met students in the US, they asked me if I rode a camel to school in Kuwait.

Since the second passage contains a main idea sentence, most people will find it easier to understand.

Writing your thesis statement

Answering the prompt

If your instructor gave you a question to respond to in your essay, the thesis will generally be the answer to that question. Other times, your assignment may be more broad and you will have to write a working thesis statement based on the ideas you have for the assignment. We call it a "working" thesis statement because you may change it again before the final draft.

Criteria for a strong thesis statement

Whether you have a question to respond to or not, you will need to write your thesis statement carefully. Since your thesis statement is the "sign" that your readers will follow to understand your essay, you should take your time to carefully write and revise it.

Here are some qualities of a strong thesis:

- **Arguable:** This means that someone might disagree with it. When you are writing an essay for a college class you **do not want to** write something that everyone already knows and agrees with. Make people curious and want to read your paper!
- **Specific:** You want your thesis statement to be **focused**. If it is too broad or general, the argument will be unclear and unfocused.
- **Not just personal opinion:** You want your thesis to have **enough reasons and examples** that your readers will be persuaded by. If you just share a personal opinion, that will not persuade others.

Include organization language

A strong thesis will show your reader how the essay is organized. That will help readers to focus on and understand your argument. For example, if your essay is mainly focusing on arguing in favor of one solution to a problem, you should point that out to your readers. Table 2.2.1 presents some language that can be included in a thesis statement to signal how your essay will be organized.

Table 5.1.1: Thesis statement language that can be used to signal different organization patterns

Organization feature in your essay	Signal words you can include in your thesis	Example thesis statement with signal word [in brackets]
Concession	• Although • While • Despite • In spite of	[In spite of] the clear problems with stereotypes, we cannot totally eliminate them from our thinking. [Although] there are clear problems with stereotypes, it is impossible to totally eliminate them from our thinking.
Solutions	• we must • it is necessary to • can be overcome by • solve • solutions	Given that biases develop early in life, [it is necessary to] develop anti-bias programs for preschool children. The problem of bias in children is serious, but it [can be partly overcome by] developing anti-bias programs for preschool children.

Organization feature in your essay	Signal words you can include in your thesis	Example thesis statement with signal word [in brackets]
Causes/effects	• cause • effect • lead to • result in	Better education programs for police will [result in] fewer biases and improved safety for all members of the community. A lack of explicit training about bias for police officers is a main [cause] of discriminatory police brutality.

Improving thesis statements

Now let's apply these techniques to some sample thesis statements.

Try this!

Here are some sample thesis statements. How can you improve them by making them more specific, adding key information, or including organization language?

- Stereotypes are bad and keep people from seeing the real me.
- Categorizing people is a natural function of the brain and identifying stereotypes reduces them.
- Stereotypes are painful and lower a person's self-esteem.
- Education is the way to overcome biases.

Evaluating your own thesis statements

Now let's apply this to your own writing:

Apply this!

Look at your own or a classmate's draft.

1. Underline the thesis statement. If you can't find one, write a new thesis statement.
2. Check the thesis statement to see if it is arguable, specific, and not just personal opinion.
3. Try to improve the thesis statement:
 - check if it covers the whole essay
 - replace nonspecific words
 - ask key questions
 - include organization language

Licenses and Attributions

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Susie Naughton, Santa Barbara City College and Elizabeth Wadell, Laney College. License: CC BY NC.

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

First 2 paragraphs of "Why Thesis Statements are Important" and the first 2 points under "Revising your thesis statement" are

adapted from the page [Developing a Thesis Statement](#) in *How Arguments Work* (2nd ed) by Anna Mills. License: CC BY NC SA.

This page titled [5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

5.1.1: Parallel Structure

Parallel structure & thesis statements

When writing a thesis statement, it is important to use **parallel structure**. Parallel structure means using the same grammar pattern for each part of a sentence. It is particularly useful for lists.

Here are two examples to compare. Read each one out loud. Which one was easier to read?

- "I like to read, writing, and to draw." (does **not** use parallel structure)
- "I like reading, writing, and drawing." (uses parallel structure)

Using parallel structure in writing makes your writing easier to understand and more professional.

A good thesis often includes two or three main reasons. Each of these reasons should follow the same grammar form. Here is an example of a thesis statement that uses parallel structure:

- "Studying abroad is helpful because students **improve** language skills, **learn** independence, and **explore** new cultures."

Continue reading about parallel structure below. Next, review your essay to make sure that your thesis and other sentences that contain lists use the same grammar pattern to improve readability!

What is parallel structure?

As you may know, parallel lines are two lines that continue without ever touching (see Figure 2.10.1). Parallel structure is similar. It is two separate grammar structures that exist side by side in your writing.



Figure 5.1.1.1: Parallel railroad tracks ("[Parallel Lines](#)" by Ko:(char *)hook is licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#))

Parallel structure means using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance. This results in clearer and more consistent writing, which helps readers better understand your point. We are focusing on parallel structure for two reasons. First of all, you may have errors to fix. However, if you use it correctly, it is a powerful tool for improving cohesion.

Parallel structure and cohesion

Parallel structure increases cohesion by showing your reader how ideas are connected together.

Try this!

Let's look at some quotes by public figures that have parallel structure. Can you make a guess at how they end?

1. "Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is"—James Baldwin
2. "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice" —The Dalai Lama
3. "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite..." —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
4. "Success is getting what you want. Happiness is wanting" —Dale Carnegie
5. "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them" —Maya Angelou
6. "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what" —Winston Churchill
7. "To be smart on crime, we should not be in a position of constantly reacting to crime after it happens. We should be looking at preventing crime" —Kamala Harris
8. "I just hope that more people will ignore the fatalism of the argument that we are beyond repair. We are not beyond repair. We are never" —Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
9. "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what...." —John F. Kennedy

(To see the complete quotation, check the [2.15: Answer Key: Organization and Cohesion](#))

Answer available at the end of this section.

As you can see, it was easier to guess and remember the quotations because they use parallel structure. Would anyone remember a quotation like "Ask not what your country can do for you. Instead, why don't you think about whether there is anything that you can do to help improve your nation"? Probably not.

In paragraphs, we can see the same thing. We can understand complex ideas more clearly if there is parallel structure that shows us how they are connected.

Types of parallel structure

We can use parallel structure for single words up through entire clauses. Let's see how that works.

Parallel structure with words

If you are listing words, make sure that all of the words are the same part of speech.

Incorrect parallel structure: Stereotypes are inevitable and problems.

Here, you have an adjective and a noun. The reader will get a little lost in the reading because they will not understand the connection between these words. You can fix it by making both words into adjectives.

Improved parallel structure: Stereotypes are inevitable and problematic.

Parallel structure with verbs

If you are using two or more verbs that are part of a list, that are connected by a conjunction, or that come after another verb, make sure they are the same form and tense.

Incorrect parallel structure: I hate to make stereotypes about others and hearing others making stereotypes about me.

You can use either a gerund or an infinitive after the verb "hate", but you should choose the same form for both verbs.

Improved parallel structure: I hate making stereotypes about others and hearing others making stereotypes about me.

Parallel structure with phrases and clauses

If you are using two or more phrases or clauses that are part of a list or comparison or that are linked by a conjunction, make sure they follow the same structure. This will make it easier for readers to understand the connection between your idea.

Incorrect parallel structure: There is a lot of discussion about what women experience when they are studying science and engineering and better supporting them.

This sentence confusing for the reader because the objects of the preposition "about" are long and have different structures. To make it more clear, the same structure can be used for both. For example, making them both noun clauses that start with "wh" question words will make the relationship more clear.

Improved parallel structure: There is a lot of discussion about what women experience while studying science and engineering and how universities can better support them.

Identifying parallel structure

Let's see how published writers use parallel structure to make complex sentences and ideas more clear for the reader.

Notice this!

Here is a paragraph from a published research paper by on women in engineering by Kathleen N. Smith and Joy Gaston Gayles. It has a variety of sentence structures. Can you find examples of parallel structure of words, phrases, or clauses?

Why is it that women who are talented in math and science avoid or leave engineering majors and careers? An American Association of University Women report on women's success in engineering and computing suggests that women who persist in science and engineering are not all that different from women who decide to leave. The major difference between staying and leaving has been found to have less to do with the women themselves and more to do with the academic and workplace environments where they attend school and pursue careers. Throughout the literature on women's persistence in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, a range of structural and cultural barriers contribute to the high prevalence of gender bias in these fields, with direct implications for women's self-efficacy, experiences, opportunities, and success, particularly in engineering.

(For possible answers, check the [2.15: Answer Key: Organization and Cohesion](#))

Fixing errors with parallel structure

Here are some tips for improving your parallel structure:

Articles and prepositions

Articles (*a, an, the*) and prepositions (*of, in, by, at, etc.*) in a list should either be used only once or be repeated with each term:

- Faulty parallelism: **The** science fields, **the** technology fields, and engineering fields.
 - Correction: **The** science fields, **the** technology fields, and **the** engineering fields.
 - Alternate correction: **The** science fields, technology fields, and engineering fields.
- Faulty parallelism: **In** elementary school, high school, or **in** college.
 - Correction: **In** elementary school, **in** high school, or **in** college.
 - Alternate correction: **In** elementary school, high school, or college.

Correlative expressions

Correlative expressions are phrases that are used to connect structures together. However, sometimes they are used incorrectly.

Here are some tips:

- "not only" requires a "but also"
- "either" requires an "or"
- "neither" requires a "nor"
- say "first, second, third, etc." or ("firstly, secondly, thirdly," etc.)

Here are some examples:

- Faulty parallelism: It was **neither** helpful or useful.
 - Corrected version: It was **neither** helpful **nor** useful.
- Faulty parallelism: It was **not only** a long class, it was boring.
 - Corrected version: **Not only** was the class long, **but** it was **also** boring.
- Faulty parallelism: **First**, I will explain the problem. **Secondly**, I will offer a solution.
 - Corrected version: **First**, I will explain the problem. **Second**, I will offer a solution.

Add parallel structure for clarity and cohesion

As your essay, look at each sentence in your draft and check to see if you have problems with the parallel structure or if more parallel structure can make the relationship between ideas stronger.

Try this!

Here are three sentences from a student's body paragraph. How can you improve the parallel structure?

- Having stereotypes highlights people's differences and equality is nearly impossible. In her TED talk, Chimimanda Adichie claims, "The consequence of the single story is this: it robs people dignity. . . . It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar."
- What she means is that a single story usually focuses on what other groups do not have and it benefits the people telling the story, rather than the entire truth.
- This makes us look at our differences and society is less equal.

(For possible answers, check the [2.15: Answer Key: Organization and Cohesion](#))

Works Cited

Smith, Kathleen N., and Joy Gaston Gayles. "'Girl Power': Gendered Academic and Workplace Experiences of College Women in Engineering." *Social Sciences* 7.1 (2018): 11. *Crossref*. Web.

Licenses and Attributions

Authored by Elizabeth Wadell, Laney College. License: CC BY NC.

Sample sentences from a paragraph on stereotypes are adapted from an essay entitled "Single Story: Matters More Than You Thought" by Tram Nguyen. License: CC BY.

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

Remixed by Talley Caruso (2025). The original version can be accessed for free at [What is Parallel structure?](#) and [Improving your Parallel structure](#) are adapted from [Technical Writing at LBCC's page Parallel Contruction](#). License: CC BY.

The paragraph on women in engineering in the Notice this! box is from ["Girl Power": Gendered Academic and Workplace Experiences of College Women in Engineering](#)" by Kathleen N. Smith and Joy Gasten Gales, licensed CC BY.

Answers

Try this!

This page titled [5.1.1: Parallel Structure](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

5.2: Essay Introductions

The purpose of an introduction

A good introduction captures your reader's attention and makes them want to read on.

It also gives the reader background information they need to understand what you are writing in your paper. You will write a working draft of the introduction. We call it a "working" draft introduction because you likely update it after making edits to the thesis statement and supporting paragraphs.

Parts of an introduction paragraph

The introduction consists of three parts: a hook, background information, and a thesis:

Hook: Introduce the topic and get readers interested

The purpose of a hook is to provide a general statement about your topic and get your audience excited about reading your essay. You may begin with a question, offer a statistic, share an interesting fact, tell a story, pose a problem, etc.

Here are **two** different strategies for writing a hook and example hooks.

- **General Statement:** It is hard to admit that we may be affected by other peoples' stereotypes of us.
- **Question:** Did you know that what others assume about you can affect how well you perform on a test?

Background: Build context for your essay

The background information defines your topic and shows why your topic matters. It provides context for your thesis statement. You may introduce important sources, define key terms, share a brief history, explain the debate, etc.

Here is the background information for a summary/response essay. For this kind of essay, the background information includes a summary:

This is just one of the findings reported by Kristy McRaney and her colleagues in "Stereotype Threat," a chapter in the textbook *The Psychology of Gender*. In this chapter, McRaney and her colleagues discuss a number of studies that examine the phenomenon known as stereotype threat: a situation in which someone is stereotyped, is aware of the stereotype, and is taking part in an activity related to the stereotype (par. 1). According to research reported by McRaney et al., "being aware that *others* believe [the stereotype], is enough to create a stereotype threat outcome" of poorer performance (par. 5). McRaney and her colleagues also look at research exploring *why* stereotype threat impacts test performance, including the commonly-accepted theory by Toni Schmader that preoccupation with a stereotype threat means that the test-taker "ties up valuable cognitive resources" which "impacts the capacity that one has to draw on their memory and to attend and focus on the task before them" (par. 8). Finally, their article acknowledges and responds to criticism of the idea of stereotype threat (McRaney et al. par 9).

Thesis statement: Roadmap to your essay

Your thesis statement drives your essay. It's your controlling idea.

- What do you intend to prove in your essay?
- What is your position about the topic, and your reasons for believing it?

A thesis is generally one sentence, but it can be longer for a long essay. It should present your idea, not an announcement of what you will do (ie, "In this essay, I will give three examples of...."). In the U.S., a thesis statement usually comes at the end of an

introduction paragraph. Here is a strong thesis statement:

Overall, McRaney and her colleagues make an understandable and compelling argument for the existence of stereotype threat; the information they present is engaging, seems balanced, and helped me make sense of my own experiences.

Let's put it all together

Here is an example of a complete introduction paragraph, with a hook, background, and thesis statement:

Did you know that what others assume about you can affect how well you perform on a test? This is just one of the findings reported by Kristy McRaney and her colleagues in "Stereotype Threat," a chapter in the textbook *The Psychology of Gender*. In this chapter, McRaney and her colleagues discuss a number of studies that examine the phenomenon known as stereotype threat: a situation in which someone is stereotyped, is aware of the stereotype, and is taking part in an activity related to the stereotype (par. 1). According to research reported by McRaney et al., "being aware that *others* believe [the stereotype], is enough to create a stereotype threat outcome" of poorer performance (par. 5). McRaney and her colleagues also look at research exploring *why* stereotype threat impacts test performance, including the commonly-accepted theory by Toni Schmader that preoccupation with a stereotype threat means that the test-taker "ties up valuable cognitive resources" which "impacts the capacity that one has to draw on their memory and to attend and focus on the task before them" (par. 8). Finally, their article acknowledges and responds to criticism of the idea of stereotype threat (McRaney et al. par 9). Overall, McRaney and her colleagues make an understandable and compelling argument for the existence of stereotype threat; the information they present is engaging, seems balanced, and helped me make sense of my own experiences.

Identifying the parts of an introduction

Try this!

Here is another sample introduction. Can you find the hook, background, and thesis statement?

Have you ever realized that your first impression about someone was wrong? It is common to have this experience, but it can be useful to understand more about why you thought this. Were your first impressions based on someone's race, gender, general appearance, age, etc.? Chimamanda Adichie describes a similar experience in her TED talk, "The Danger of a Single Story." When she started to write her writing was only influenced by British and American books that she used to read and she was not influenced by her everyday reality. She thought that all books are the same. Later she read books written by African writers like Chinua Achebe and Camara Laye, Adichie felt familiar with the places and characters in the stories. She understood that people like her exist in stories and that knowing only a single story is a danger and it leads to creating stereotypes. "Single stories" develop from making assumptions about others based on hearsay or the media, so the way to combat them is to increase opportunities for genuine interaction between people from different backgrounds.

Licenses and Attributions

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Susie Naughton, Santa Barbara City College. License: CC BY NC.

Sample introduction paragraph on stereotype threat by Clara Zimmerman, Porterville College. License: CC BY NC.

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

[The Purpose of an Introduction](#) is adapted from the Excelsior Online Writing Lab's [Introductions](#). License: CC BY.

This page titled [5.2: Essay Introductions](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs

The parts of a body paragraph

Body paragraphs support and develop your thesis statement.

Each body paragraph should focus on **ONE point**, usually communicated at the beginning of the paragraph in the form of a (A) **topic sentence**. A strong body paragraph should also contain (B) **supporting evidence**, (C) **analysis** showing how this evidence connects to your topic sentence and thesis statement and, finally, (D) a **concluding sentence**.

Noticing the structure of a body paragraph

Let's look at a sample body paragraph and evaluate how effective it is.

Notice this!

Read the following body paragraph. As you read, think about how the body paragraph does or doesn't fit with our definition above. The thesis statement for this essay is, "The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete, and make one story become the only story."

Adichie argues that a single story usually provides only one part of a story: just one negative or positive side of a person, yet this becomes their label or their definition. Adichie cites the example of Modupe Akinola, a female African-American professor. When she began teaching at Columbia Business School, students often asked her when the professor would arrive because she did not fit the stereotype of what a professor should look like in the U.S. Stereotypes are "incomplete" and can lead to prejudice as Adichie points out in her TED talk. Due to a lack of exposure, Akinola's students were probably expecting to see an old white male or possibly a white female professor instead of a young African-American female professor. Also, because of the angry black female stereotype (Eberhardt), during lectures, this may lead students to read Akinola's facial expressions in an incorrect way which may cause confusion.

If you found the paragraph a little confusing, you aren't alone (see figure 2.5.1)! For example, this paragraph lacks a clear topic sentence; this makes it more difficult for both readers and the writer of the essay to get a clear grasp of the paragraph's purpose. The supporting evidence also isn't sufficiently introduced, and there's no clear concluding sentence.



Figure 5.3.1: "Confused" by [CollegeDegrees360](#) is marked with [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).

Let's explore each element of a strong body paragraph in further detail. Then, we'll come back to this paragraph about stereotypes.

Topic sentences

Each body paragraph should begin with a topic sentence that is directly related to and supportive of your thesis statement. All of the sentences in the rest of the paragraph should relate to, support, and expand on the topic sentence.

- The topic sentence is usually the first sentence of a body paragraph
- Like a thesis statement, a topic sentence should be specific and show the writer's perspective on the subject. A topic sentence should be clear, to-the-point, and in your own words (in general, avoid starting the topic sentence with a quotation or paraphrase)
- A topic sentence can also help the reader transition from one idea in the previous paragraph to the next by referring to a previous idea

Support

Develop the main idea using supporting sentences. Supporting sentences help explain, prove, or enhance the topic sentence.

Textual evidence

- Textual evidence involves integrating outside sources into your writing.
- Books, journals, websites, newspapers, magazines, TED talks, and documentary films are common sources of textual evidence in academic writing.
- This type of evidence often includes information such as facts, statistics, and examples.

Personal experience and anecdotes

Personal experience can count as evidence when appropriate as well (e.g., to illustrate a point) but is often most effective when paired with other types of evidence.

Commentary or analysis

This is *your* thinking about the evidence. This is where you interpret, explain, or comment on your evidence so your reader knows what to do with the point you are making. Your commentary should connect back to your topic sentence and the core of your thesis statement. Here are some questions to think about when writing your commentary/analysis:

- How is this idea related to my thesis statement? How does it support my thesis?
- What conclusions can I draw?
- What does this information imply or suggest?
- What are the consequences of thinking this way or looking at a problem this way?
- I just said that something happens, so how does it happen? How can I show this?
- Can I give an example to illustrate this point?
- How might this evidence relate to other texts?

Concluding sentence

The concluding sentence is the last sentence in the paragraph. It reminds the reader of your paragraph's main point, and it might hint at the topic of your next sentence.

Finding the parts of a body paragraph

Let's put this all together.

Try this!

Read the following paragraph. It is a revised version of the body paragraph at the beginning of this section. Can you identify the following elements?

- Topic sentence
 - What is the topic?
 - What is the controlling idea?
- Evidence
- Analysis
- Concluding sentence

Stereotypes are problematic because they give an incomplete view of a person within a group. In her TED talk "The Danger of a Single Story," Adichie argues that a single story usually provides only one part of a story: just one negative or positive side of a person, yet this becomes their label or their definition. An example of this kind of stereotyping is what happened to Modupe Akinola, a female African-American professor. When she began teaching at Columbia Business School, students often asked her when the professor would arrive because she did not fit the stereotype of what a professor should look like in the U.S (Akinola). People tend to make assumptions about the single story they hold of a particular group. Due to a lack of exposure, Akinola's students were probably expecting to see an old white male or possibly a white female professor instead of a young African-American female professor. Also, because of the angry black female stereotype (Eberhardt), during lectures, this may lead students to read Akinola's facial expressions in an incorrect way which may cause confusion. Thus, stereotypes are "incomplete" and can lead to prejudice as Adichie points out in her TED talk.

(For possible answers, check the [2.15: Answer Key: Organization and Cohesion](#).)

Writing a body paragraph

Now, it's your turn to try!

Apply this!

Look at your own or a classmate's draft. Focus on one body paragraph.

- Can you identify a topic sentence?
 - Does it express both the topic and your paragraph's controlling idea?
 - Does it relate directly to your thesis statement?
- What kind of outside support, or evidence, do you use?
- How do you explain or analyze that evidence? Is there more you can say?
- How do you conclude the paragraph?

Section review

Body paragraphs support and develop your thesis statement. Each body paragraph should focus on one point. Strong body paragraphs contain the following elements:

- A topic sentence, which is usually communicated at the beginning of the paragraph
 - Supporting evidence
 - Analysis showing how this evidence connects to your topic sentence and thesis statement
 - A concluding sentence.
-

Works Cited

Adichie, Chimimanda. "[The Danger of a Single Story](#)." *TED*. July, 2009.

Eberhardt, Jennifer. "[How Racial Bias Works — And How to Disrupt it](#)." *Ted*. June, 2020.

Licenses and Attributions

Authored by Susie Naughton, Santa Barbara City College, and Clara Zimmerman, Porterville College. License: CC BY NC.

This page titled [5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph

The main parts of a conclusion

The conclusion, or concluding paragraph, is the final paragraph in the essay. It is the last paragraph your readers will read. It will wrap up your ideas and leave them something to think about. Having a strong conclusion will help to leave a clear idea in the reader's mind.

Start with an Umbrella sentence

The umbrella sentence is one sentence that gives the main idea of your whole paper. It is similar to your thesis, but it should have **different words** and can also be a little simpler. Let's compare a thesis statement with an umbrella sentence.

Here is a student's THESIS statement: "The **problem** with **stereotypes** is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete, and make one story become the only story."

A possible UMBRELLA sentence could be: "**Stereotypes** are **harmful** because they present **flawed** and **incomplete** views of a person or a group of people." (*Notice how the umbrella sentence covers the same general information as the thesis statement, but is less detailed.*)

Provide a Short Summary

Remind the reader of the points you made in your essay so they can see how everything fits together. Summarize the main idea of each paragraph in a total of 3 sentences or fewer.

Give the Reader a Final Thought or Idea

As you say goodbye to your reader, you want them to keep thinking about your essay and why the ideas are important. **Do not introduce any new ideas.** Instead, write one of the following:

- a suggestion
- an explanation of why this is important or what you want readers to learn
- a reflection on how your own thinking changed through writing this.
- a prediction or warning for the future
- return to the hook from the introduction with an explanation of how the knowledge we have gained through your paper changes our understanding of it (this makes your paper feel like a full circle, and can be satisfying for the reader)

Identifying

Identifying the summary

Let's see what that looks like:

Notice this!

Read the following conclusion. The sentences [in brackets] are summary sentences that indicate the contents of the writer's body paragraphs.

Stereotypes are harmful because they present flawed and incomplete views that can lead to prejudice. [On an individual level, they take away a person's true identity; a person is given a label based on a group identity that cannot accurately be applied to each person. On a societal level, stereotypes can lead to policies that discriminate against particular groups of people. Stereotypes can also lead to physical violence, as in the examples of the anti-Muslim mosque attacks and anti-Semitic synagogue attacks in Southern California.] By working hard to combat our own biases and speaking up when we see a "single story" dominate, we can lessen the damaging impact of stereotypes and make the world a safer, more equitable place.

Identifying food for thought

Let's see what some of these look like:

Try this!

Can you identify what type of food for thought is shown in each of the following sentences?

1. By working hard to combat our own biases and speaking up when we see a "single story" dominate, we can lessen the damaging impact of stereotypes and make the world a safer, more equitable place.
2. Researching the topic of bias revealed some large gaps in my understanding, and now I realize that more than ever, identifying and addressing our own personal biases is critical.
3. Although it may be easier to avoid the potential discomfort of considering more than a "single story" about a person or group of people, failure to take multiple stories into account risks a bleak, increasingly polarized future.

(For possible answers, check the [2.15: Answer Key: Organization and Cohesion](#).)

Identifying the parts of a conclusion

Let's see if you can identify the main parts of a conclusion:

Try this!

Here is the conclusion to the summary/response essay we looked at earlier in this chapter. Can you find the umbrella sentence, summary, and food for thought?

In "Stereotype Threat," McRaney and her colleagues clearly and evenhandedly explain the phenomenon of stereotype threat. Their choice of language makes the chapter interesting and accessible to students who may not have training in the social sciences, even as the authors cite many academic sources. The authors also spend time addressing and responding to some common criticisms of and doubts about the existence of stereotype threat, which makes the ideas they discuss more credible. Furthermore, the content is relatable: the examples provided in the text helped me identify an instance of stereotype threat in my own life and made me think about other situations where stereotype threat may have been at play. Their chapter highlights an important phenomenon and, with this knowledge, institutions and individuals can take steps to create environments in and out of the classroom that lessen the chance stereotype threat will negatively (and needlessly) affect performance.

(For possible answers, check the [2.15: Answer Key: Organization and Cohesion](#).)

Writing your conclusion

Let's put this all together in your own writing:

Apply this!

Look at a draft of your writing, focusing on the conclusion.

- Can you identify the three main elements of a conclusion?
- Is your umbrella sentence directly connected to, but not exactly the same as, your thesis statement?
- Does your summary address all the topics in your body paragraphs? (Hint: Look at the topic sentences in each body paragraph; this should help you answer this question.)
- What information do you leave your reader with in the very last sentence? A suggestion? A return to your hook? Or something else?

Section review

- The conclusion, or concluding paragraph, is the final paragraph in your essay.
 - A strong conclusion will help to leave a clear idea in the reader's mind.
 - The three main parts of a conclusion are:
 1. Umbrella sentence
 2. Summary
 3. Food for thought
-

Licenses and Attributions

Authored by Susie Naughton, Santa Barbara City College, Clara Zimmerman, Porterville College, and Elizabeth Wadell, Laney College. License: CC BY NC.

This page titled [5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

6: EDITING AND REVISING YOUR DRAFT

6.1: Peer Editing

6.2: Reverse Outline

6.3: Knowing When to Cite

6.4: Formatting Your Paper

6.5: Language Toolkit

This page titled [6: Editing and Revising Your Draft](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

6.1: Peer Editing

Peer Editing Worksheet

Directions: Use this Peer Editing worksheet to help your writing partner improve their writing through getting an "outside" perspective.

Peer editing helps writers identify where their writing might need more background information, a shorter summary, or more relevant evidence to convince the reader about their point.

The purpose of an introduction

A good introduction captures your reader's attention and makes them want to read on.

Hook: Introduce the topic and get readers interested

1. What is the first sentence? Is it a hook? (circle one: Y or N) and write the hook below:
2. Is the first sentence a **General Statement** or a **Question**? (circle one)

Background: Build context for your essay

3. What is the topic and why does it matter?
4. What is key information that will help the reader understand this topic?
5. Does the background information include **Important sources**, **Define key terms**, **Share a brief history**, or **Explain the debate** ? (circle one or more)

Thesis statement: Roadmap to your essay

6. What is the **Thesis Statement**? Write the thesis statement below:
-

The parts of a body paragraph

Each body paragraph should focus on **ONE point**, usually communicated at the beginning of the paragraph in the form of a (A) **topic sentence**. A strong body paragraph should also contain (B) **supporting evidence** (example), (C) **analysis** showing how this evidence connects to your topic sentence and thesis statement and, finally, (D) a **concluding sentence**.

1. What is the **Thesis Statement** from the Intro Paragraph? Body paragraphs support and develop your thesis statement. Write the Thesis Statement below and reference it as you review the body paragraphs.

Topic Sentence: Support your thesis statement

2. What is the **Topic Sentence** of the first body paragraph?
3. Is it the **first sentence** in the paragraph? (circle one: Y or N)
4. Does the **Topic Sentence** use similar keywords as the **Thesis**? (circle one: Y or N)

Evidence: Support your topic sentence idea with specific examples

In your first body paragraph there should be 2 pieces of Evidence, each supported by Analysis.

Supporting Evidence A

Check your first piece of **Evidence**. This should be from the assigned text.

5. What is **Supporting Evidence A**?
6. What page of the book is the information from? **page** _____.
7. Go to the page in the book. Compare the paraphrase with the original text. Are there 3 or more words (in a row) that match between the original text and the paraphrase attempt for Evidence A? (circle one: Y or N)
8. (**Analysis**) Explain how **Evidence A** supports the **Topic Sentence**.
9. (**Analysis**) Explain how **Evidence A** supports the **Thesis**.

Supporting Evidence B

Check your second piece of **Evidence**. This can be from the assigned text or another trustworthy source. It can also be based on personal observation or experience.

11. What is **Supporting Evidence B**?
 12. What page of the book is the information from? **page** _____. *If Not Applicable, skip questions 13 and 14.*
 13. Go to the page in the book. Compare the paraphrase with the original text. Is the paraphrased information a summary of the original text? (circle one: Y or N)
 14. Are there 3 or more words (in a row) that match between the original text and the paraphrase attempt for Evidence B? (circle one: Y or N)
 15. (**Analysis**) Explain how **Evidence B** supports the **Topic Sentence**.
 16. (**Analysis**) Explain how **Evidence B** supports the **Thesis**.
-

The main parts of a conclusion

This final paragraph will wrap up your ideas and leave readers with something to think about.

1. What is the **Thesis Statement** from the Intro Paragraph? Write it below:

Umbrella Statement

Check your **concluding Umbrella Sentence**.

1. Is your umbrella sentence directly connected to, but not exactly the same as, your thesis statement? (circle one: Y or N)
2. Write down any synonym pairs you used and look up how they are used in context (within sentence examples). Do you need to update your choice of synonyms to improve accuracy? (circle one: Y or N)

Concluding Summary

Check your **concluding Summary**.

1. In the concluding paragraph, include key words from the topic sentences of each body paragraph.
 1. Key words from Body Paragraph 1:
 2. Key words from Body Paragraph 2:
2. Check that your concluding Summary talks about all the topics listed.

Final Thought or Idea

1. What is your **Final Thought or Idea**?
2. What information do you leave your reader with in the very last sentence? A suggestion? A return to your hook? Or something else?

Important: Do NOT introduce any new, off-topic ideas in the concluding paragraph. Read each sentence carefully and make sure it reviews what you already wrote in the Intro and Body paragraphs.

Reference the [Example Essay](#) for MLA formatting guidelines and notes.

6.1 Peer Editing, by Talley Caruso, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License CC BY.

6.2: Reverse Outline

Reverse Outline for a 4-paragraph Essay

Directions: Use this Reverse Outline to analyze and reflect on the structure and clarity of your already-written draft. This can be used before or after the peer editing worksheet.

Reverse outlines help you see where supporting information (evidence) is missing or needs to be stronger for a specific point. This will also help you identify where you need to connect your evidence, topic, and thesis more closely.

Introduction

What is the hook?

(How does your introduction grab the reader's attention?)

What is the thesis statement?

(What is the main argument or point of your essay?)

Body Paragraph #1

What is the topic sentence for Body Paragraph #1?

Underline words shared between the topic sentence and thesis statement.

Evidence 1A:

Analysis connecting Evidence 1A to the topic/thesis:

Evidence 1B:

Analysis connecting Evidence 1B to the topic/thesis:

Summary of Body Paragraph #1 (5-10 words):

Body Paragraph #2

What is the topic sentence for Body Paragraph #2?

Underline words shared between the topic sentence and thesis statement.

Evidence 2A:

Analysis connecting Evidence 2A to the topic/thesis:

Evidence 2B:

Analysis connecting Evidence 2B to the topic/thesis:

Summary of Body Paragraph #2 (5–10 words):

Conclusion

What is the umbrella sentence?

(A broad statement that wraps up your argument.)

Underline words/concepts shared with the thesis statement:

Does the conclusion include a summary of:

Introduction

Supporting Paragraph #1

Supporting Paragraph #2

What is the final thought or closing idea?

6.2 Reverse Outline, by Talley Caruso, is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License CC BY

6.3: Knowing When to Cite

What is citation?

As an academic writer, you are expected to not just use your own ideas in writing but to also back up your ideas with information from other books, articles, videos, etc. like the multilingual library resources shown in Figure 4.4.1. In addition, you need to show your readers where you got your information from. This process is called *citation* or *citing your sources*. Citation makes you a more credible writer because it shows that you have spent time reading and thinking about other sources and that you have evidence to support your points. Equally importantly, it helps you to avoid plagiarism.



Figure 6.3.1: "Multilingual Welcome" by Valley Library (Oregon State University) is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

Citation has two parts: an in-text citation is a reference to the source author's name (or the source title if there is no author) in the sentence with information from that source, and the Works Cited page, which is a more detailed list of references at the end of your paper. You will learn more about these in [Formatting Your Paper](#).

Finding citations

We will Let's look at a body paragraph that a student wrote on preserving native languages.

Notice this!

What sentences in this sample paragraph include citations? Why did the writer cite those sentences?

The most important thing immigrant parents can do is to speak heritage language at home. Using the heritage language to communicate at home is an important way to preserve the values, convictions, culture and identity of the family (Guardado). The transmission of a language happens when the language is spoken and nothing better than parents speaking their home language with their children because it will be an emotional language. Also, when parents talk to their children in their home language, they transmit their culture with stories and family background. In fact, that help families to keep their identity and their cohesion. As an immigrant father explains, "We need to talk about our roots as immigrants. Keeping Korean means keeping our roots" (qtd. in Brown 33). As this quote shows, immigrant parents believe that without the communication with children in their heritage language, they would probably become disconnected from their past and family identity. While parents may also transmit their culture in their new language, they may be less successful because the home language is so closely tied to emotions.

When to cite (or not to cite)

Some writers are not sure what ideas need to be cited or not. You **must** cite:

- Any time that you use exact words from a source. These words must be in quotation marks.
- Any time you paraphrase a source.
- Any time that you use information or ideas that came from another source, which you did not know before doing your research, you must cite the source of the information.

Be particularly careful any time you use numbers or statistics from a source. Without a citation, it will look as if you just made this information up!

However, you do not need to cite:

- Information that is general knowledge—things that everybody knows.
- Statements that are obviously true.
- Anecdotal evidence from your own experience.

Deciding if you should cite

Let's look at some sample sentences from a research paper on preserving native languages:

Try this!

Should these sentences be cited? After you decide, check the answers.

1. More than half of the 6,900 languages in the world will disappear over the next 100 years.
2. It was easy for my cousins who were born in Switzerland to learn Portuguese because there is a large Portuguese community there. In contrast, my niece is growing up in the United States and I am her only Portuguese speaking relative. Consequently, she understands almost everything, but she cannot speak Portuguese.
3. Most immigrants feel the need to transmit their language and culture to their children because it is part of their identity.
4. Children of immigrants who are bilingual have better academic performance than children of immigrants who do not know their parents' native language.

(To see answers, check [4.12: Integrating Evidence Answer Key](#))

Works Cited

Brown, Clara Lee. "Maintaining Heritage Language: Perspectives of Korean Parents." *Multicultural Education*, vol. 19, no. 1, Fall 2011, pp. 31-37. Eric.ed.gov.

Guardado, Martin. "Language, Identity, and Cultural Awareness in Spanish-Speaking Families." *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, vol. 40, no. 3, Sept. 2008, pp. 171-181. EBSCOhost.

Tesch, Noah. "Why Do Languages Die?". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Accessed 11 December 2021.

Tran, Van C. "English Gain Vs. Spanish Loss? Language Assimilation among Second-Generation Latinos in Young Adulthood." *Social Forces*, vol. 89, no. 1, Sept. 2010, pp. 257-284. EBSCOhost.

Licenses and Attributions

Authored by Anne Agard and Elizabeth Wadell, Laney College. License: CC BY NC.

Body paragraph on heritage languages and sentences in "Deciding if you should cite" are from "Heritage Languages: the Language

of Emotions", a research paper by Joana Coelho Silverio. License: CC BY.

This page titled [6.3: Knowing When to Cite](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

6.4: Formatting Your Paper

Why do we want a standard format?

When you go to a job interview, what do you wear? Most people try to dress professionally (see figure 4.9.1) to make a good first impression because sometimes people make judgments based on outside appearances instead of content. When you send your essay out to be read by other people, you probably also want it to make a good first impression on your readers. You want them to think that your essay is professional and academic, even before they read a single word.



Figure 6.4.1: Man wearing a suit at a job interview. ("Man on a Job Interview" by amtec_photos is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#))

When you write papers for a college course, the instructor will usually require you to use a specific format. Format is a standard way that a paper is required to look. It includes things like the heading, the font, and the punctuation of the list of sources and the in-text citations. There are several different official formats that look different but serve the same purposes. The format makes the paper easy to read, and makes your information about your sources easy for the reader to find.

When you glance at the two papers in figure 4.9.2, which do you think uses an official format? What differences can you find?

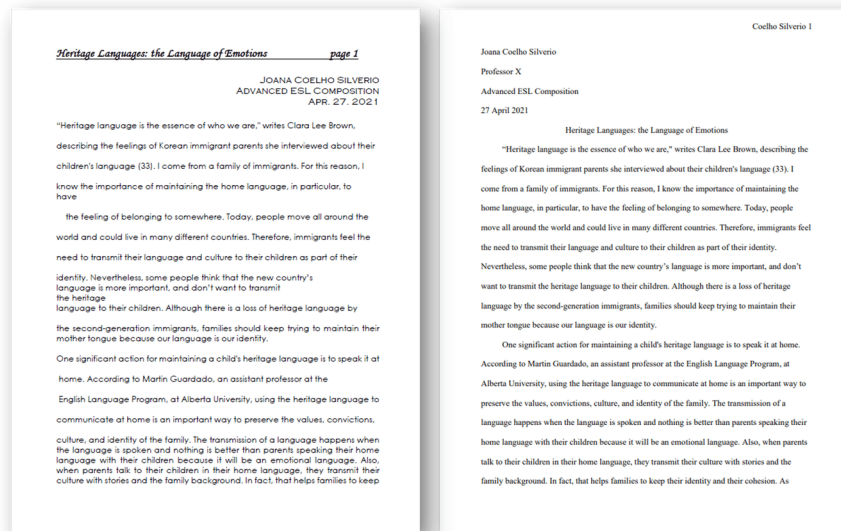


Figure 6.4.2: "Format comparison" by Gabriel Winer is licensed under CC BY NC.

The two official formats that you will probably need to use in your college courses are MLA format and APA format. The initials stand for the organization that has established the format.

"MLA" stands for *Modern Language Association*. MLA format is international, and is used for academic papers and journals in the areas of language, literature and the humanities. For college English classes, you will be required to use MLA format.

"APA" stands for *American Psychological Association*. APA format is used for academic papers and journals in the social sciences. For many college papers other than English papers, you will be required to use APA format.

MLA format

Setting up a document in MLA format

The following are the basic guidelines for setting up an MLA-formatted document. Your word program will have menu controls to help you with these settings.

- Set margins to 1" on left, right, top, and bottom.
- Set margins to ½" for header and footer.
- Use a standard 12-point font throughout the document. Times New Roman is the most common.
- Double-space throughout the document. Also remove extra space between paragraphs (Microsoft Word defaults to putting in an extra space).
- Use a straight left edge and a "ragged" right edge.
- Indent paragraphs ½" (1 tab).
- Center a document title on page 1. Use plain 12-point font—do not bold, underline, or italicize.
- Create an upper left heading on page 1 only. This should include the following:
 - Your name (first and last name)
 - The teacher's name
 - The name of the class
 - The date
- Create an upper right header for all pages. This should include the following:
 - Your last name
 - An automatic page number

Sample essay in MLA format

The link below opens a version of a sample essay formatted in MLA 8th edition:

Creating an MLA Works Cited page

The purpose of the Works Cited page is to collect all of the sources used in a text and to arrange them so they are easy for your reader to locate. Listing the sources also helps you track them and makes it less likely that you might accidentally plagiarize by forgetting to mention a piece of source material.

Setting up the page

Follow these guidelines to set up your Works Cited.

- Works Cited is located at the end of a paper. Always start it at the top of a new page.
- Put the title Works Cited at the top of the page, centered.
- The Works Cited page uses the same formatting as the rest of the paper: 12 point standard font, double spacing, 1" margins on all sides, etc.
- List sources alphabetically, according to whatever comes first in each citation. (Do not list them in the order they occur within the paper.)
- Use "hanging" paragraphs to set up sources. This means that the first line of each source begins at the left margin, while second and subsequent lines are indented by ½" (1 tab). This is the reverse of a regular paragraph. The "hanging" format makes it easy to visually scroll down the list and see each source. If you are using Microsoft Word, you can set hanging paragraphs by choosing the "hanging" setting in the "Paragraphs" menu.

Figure 4.9.2 shows an annotated example of a Works Cited page ([Annotated-Works-Cited-Examples](#) to open in a new page):

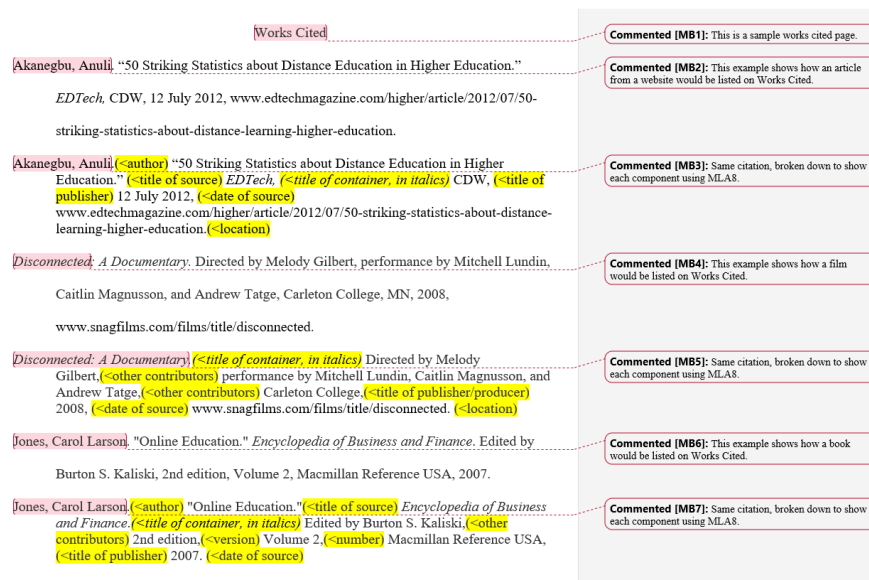


Figure 6.4.1: Annotated example of a works cited page by Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevear is licensed CC BY NC.

Creating entries on the Works Cited page

Let's look at how to set up Works Cited citations.

We'll work with this article from the *International Online Journal of Primary Education*: "A Longitudinal Study: Emergent Bilinguals' Heritage Language Use and Learning over Time." Figure 4.9.3 shows the top of the first page of this article.



IOJPE

International Online Journal of Primary Education

ISSN: 1300 – 915X

www.iojpe.org

2021, volume 10, issue 1

A LONGITUDINAL STUDY: EMERGENT BILINGUALS' HERITAGE LANGUAGE USE AND LEARNING OVER TIME

Chaehyun LEE

Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Department of Educational Instruction and Leadership, United States

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4670-4519>

clee@se.edu

Received: March 02, 2021

Accepted: April 15, 2021

Published: June 30, 2021

Figure 6.4.3: "Screenshot of online article" by [Gabriel Winer](#) is licensed under [CC BY NC](#). Article by Chaehyun Lee is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

Here is the raw information at the top of the article. You will need most of this information for your citation, but not all of it, and not in this order.

- International Online Journal of Primary Education
- 2021, volume 10, issue 1
- Copyright © International Online Journal of Primary Education
- A Longitudinal Study: Emergent Bilinguals' Heritage Language Use and Learning over Time
- Chaehyun Lee
- Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Southeastern Oklahoma State University Department of Educational Instruction and Leadership, United States
- ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4670-4519>
- clee@se.edu
- Received: March 02, 2021
- Accepted: April 15, 2021
- Published: June 30, 2021

To make a citation, find each piece of information from the source. If certain parts are not there, we simply leave them blank. Note that each item is followed with specific punctuation. Copy these as you create your own citations.

Source information types and formatting rules

Table 4.9.1 shows the types of source information you need to make a citation, an explanation of what each type is, and the special rules for how to capitalize and punctuate that item.

Table 4.9.1: Source information items for Works Cited entries

Type of information	Explanation	Formatting rules	Example
Author(s)	Person or organization who wrote the text	- The first author's name is always reversed, with a comma after the last name: Last Name, First Name. - It is followed by a period. - If there are two authors, list them as Last Name, First Name and First Name Last Name. - If there are three or more authors, list them as First Name et al. (Et al. is Latin for "and more.")	Lee, Chaehyun.
Title	Name of the text	- Capitalize all words in the title of the source except for articles, conjunctions, and prepositions. - If it is an article, essay, chapter, or any other "small" piece of material, it will be in quotation marks and plain font. - If it is a book, film, periodical, or an entire web page, it will be in <i>italic</i> font with no quotation marks. - The title of the source is followed with a period—and when quotation marks are used, note that the period always goes inside the quotation marks.	"A Longitudinal Study: Emergent Bilinguals' Heritage Language Use and Learning over Time."
Container	The container is the "place" that holds or houses the source you're using. - A book chapter (title) is held within a book (container). - A newspaper article (title) is held within a newspaper (container). - An essay on a web page (title) is held within a website (container). - A magazine article (title) is held within a magazine (container).	- Capitalize all words in the title of the source except for articles, conjunctions, and prepositions. - The container is almost always in <i>italic</i> font and followed by a comma.	<i>International Online Journal of Primary Education,</i>
Other contributors	This line provides a way to mention people who assisted with creating or handling the source, e.g., directors, translators, performers, illustrators, etc.	- List them using plain, unabbreviated language, e.g., performed by, directed by, etc. - Other contributors are listed in plain font and followed by a comma.	[This article has no other contributors. You can just skip this part.]

Type of information	Explanation	Formatting rules	Example
Version	Use this if you want to mention an edition number (e.g., Second Edition, Evening Edition, etc.) or if you want to list a volume (Volume 3), a month (January), etc.	- Version is written in plain font and followed by a comma. "Volume" is abbreviated "vol." and not capitalized.	vol. 1,
Number	Use this to provide an issue number (e.g., for a magazine or journal), a special archive number (e.g., with museum pieces), or something similar.	- Number is written in plain font, not capitalized, and followed by a comma. - Number is abbreviated "no."	no. 10,
Publisher	The publisher is the person or institution that makes the source available to the world.	- Publishers for books, periodicals, and printed materials are usually written on one of the first pages. - Web page publishers can usually be found at the page bottom. If you cannot find the publisher quickly, you might use Google to search for it, i.e., searching 'New York Times Publisher.' - Film and music publishers will usually be located on the material. - Write out the complete publisher name; capitalize it fully and don't abbreviate or omit words. - The publisher is in plain font and followed by a comma.	[Like many online sources, the container and the publisher are the same; there isn't a separate publisher, so you can just skip this part.]
Publication date	The date the text was published.	- Use MLA date format: day month year - Follow the date with a comma. - With longer months, you may abbreviate the source; if you do, follow the abbreviation with a period.	30 June 2021,

Type of information	Explanation	Formatting rules	Example
Location	The source's location tells the reader where to find the source. Many sources will not have a location, but it should be listed if present.	- If using a book, the page number is the location. - For single pages, use this format: p. 6. - For two or more pages, list like this: pp. 62-4 or pp. 184-96. - If using two or more pages and they cross a "hundred" marker, list like this: pp. 456-502. - With web pages, give the URL—but omit the http:// at the beginning. - If a doi (digital object indicator) number is available, use that instead of a URL. - Do not break URLs or doi's manually to try and fit them into your Works Cited: just type them in and let your Word processor decide where to break them. - If you have a different kind of source and believe you have a location with it, share it as best you can, following these guidelines. - Locations are in plain font and followed by a period.	pp. 1-18, www.iojpe.org/index.php/iojpe/article/view/1/4 .

Now, to create a Works Cited citation, link all of the available elements together, following the correct punctuation and placing a space between each component.

- Use your word program's menus or the little arrows on the ruler at the top to set hanging paragraphs.
- Don't break your lines manually: set hanging paragraphs and then keep typing, allowing the software to determine the line breaks.
- Your citation should always end with a period.

Complete citation:

Lee, Chaehyun. "A Longitudinal Study: Emergent Bilinguals' Heritage Language Use and Learning over Time." *International Online Journal of Primary Education*, vol. 10, no. 1, 30 June 2021, pp. 1-18, www.iojpe.org/index.php/iojpe/article/view/1/4.

Licenses and Attributions

Introduction authored by Anne Agard, Laney College. License: CC BY NC.

CC Licensed Content: previously published

Setting up a document in MLA Format is adapted from "Resources for Working with MLA" in Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevear's [The Word on College Reading and Writing](#). License CC BY NC.

Creating an MLA Works Cited page is adapted from "Creating a Works Cited Page" in Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevear's [The Word on College Reading and Writing](#). License CC BY NC.

Lee, Chaehyun. "A Longitudinal Study: Emergent Bilinguals' Heritage Language Use and Learning over Time." *International Online Journal of Primary Education*, vol. 10, no. 1, 30 June 2021, pp. 1-18. Licensed under CC BY.

This page titled [6.4: Formatting Your Paper](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

6.5: Language Toolkit

About this toolkit

This toolkit is a reference that you can use to check your work.

Strong verbs

You want to use strong verbs. To check for weak verbs, look to see if you are using "be" and "do" plus a noun to do the work of a verb. Often, you can replace these with one strong verb.

Here are some examples and revisions. The weak verbs and replacements are indicated in brackets.

- The [planting was done] by the whole community.
 - The whole community [**planted**] the garden.
 - Next, they will [do a study] on the effect of the garden on the health of the community.
 - Next, they will [**study**] the garden's effect on the community's health.
 - We [have a strong belief] in food equity.
 - We [**strongly believe**] in food equity.
-

Clear pronoun reference

In your writing, watch for the pronouns: it, they, them this, that, these, those. Check to make sure it is clear what they refer to.

Here are some examples and revisions. The unclear pronouns and replacements are indicated in brackets.

- [It] says in the newspaper that the liquor store has been turned into a small grocery store.
 - [**According to the article's author**], the liquor store has been turned into a small grocery store.
 - At the store, [they] used to only sell packaged foods; now it has fresh foods, too.
 - [**The store**] used to only sell packaged foods; now it has fresh foods, too.
 - Fresh foods are often more expensive and can take longer to prepare. [This] is a potential disadvantage.
 - Fresh foods are often more expensive and can take longer to prepare. [**These factors**] are potential disadvantages.
-

Passive vs. active voice

When you are using passive voice, make sure it is the best choice. In your writing, check for the object in the subject position and past participle form (to be + ed).

Here are some examples and revisions. The changes are indicated in brackets.

- My garden plot [was planted] yesterday.
- [**I planted**] my garden plot yesterday.
- The lettuce [was washed] thoroughly by her aunt.
- [**Her aunt washed**] the lettuce thoroughly.
- Organic food [has gotten] more attention in recent years.

- **[Consumers have given more attention to]** organic food in recent years.

Using a dictionary and thesaurus

A dictionary or thesaurus can help you decide the most effective word(s) to use in your writing.

Most dictionaries provide the following information:

- **Spelling.** How the word and its different forms are spelled.
- **Pronunciation.** How to say the word.
- **Part of speech.** The function of the word.
- **Definition.** The meaning of the word.
- **Synonyms.** Words that have similar meanings.
- **Etymology.** The history of the word.

Like a dictionary, a thesaurus is another valuable writing tool.

- A thesaurus gives you a list of synonyms, words that have the same (or very close to the same) meaning as another word.
- It also lists antonyms, words with the opposite meaning of the word.
- A thesaurus will help you when you are looking for the perfect word with just the right meaning to convey your ideas.
- It will also help you learn more words and use the ones you already know more correctly.

It is important to think about the connotations of the words you are using.

- A connotation is the emotional or cultural meaning attached to a word.
- The connotation of a word can be positive, negative, or neutral.

Using a dictionary or thesaurus can be difficult sometimes if you don't know the connotations of a word because you risk using a word in the wrong way. If you aren't sure whether you are using a word with the right connotation, look up the word in sentences on the internet and see how it's used in context. You can also ask your instructor or a tutor.

Coordination cheat sheet

Table 6.13.1 explains the logic that each coordinating conjunction represents.

Table 6.13.1: coordinating conjunctions

Function or Logic	Coordinating conjunction	Example
cause	for	Many Americans suffer from hunger, for food scarcity is a serious social issue in this country.
addition	and	People have begun paying more attention to the health benefits of organic foods, and it is no surprise that many grocery stores have expanded their organic sections.

Function or Logic	Coordinating conjunction	Example
choice or alternative (negative)	nor	The neighborhood has never had a grocery store, nor has it had a community garden.
contrast	but	Organic grocery stores seem to be everywhere, but it's still hard for many people to access them.
choice or alternative	or	Some environmental experts have commented that California's water supply can support its population, or it can support its agriculture -- but not both.
contrast	yet	California is suffering from a catastrophic drought, yet most of the nation's produce is grown here.
effect	so	Public transportation can be unreliable, so if you buy a gallon of milk and take the bus, the milk may spoil by the time you get home.

Transitions cheat sheet

Table 6.13.2 explains the logic that each subordinating conjunction represents.

Table 16.13.2: Transitions

Function or Logic	Transitions	Example
Addition	also, furthermore, moreover, similarly, likewise	Community gardens are places that allow people to provide food for themselves; moreover, this food is frequently more nutritious than what can be bought at grocery stores.
Contrast	instead, however, otherwise	Research on Google Maps shows that there are at least ten corner liquor stores in West Oakland; however, there are no supermarkets like Whole Foods.

Function or Logic	Transitions	Example
Emphasis	namely, certainly, indeed	It is important to draw attention to food inequity; indeed, many people are unaware that it exists at such high levels in the United States.
Cause and Effect	accordingly, as a result, consequently, hence, thus, therefore	There are insufficient outlets for fresh food in their community; therefore, it's hard for residents of West Oakland who live in food deserts to access healthy produce.
Time	finally, next, subsequently, then, after	First, we are going to take a survey of the neighborhood's needs; then, we can write a proposal.
Condition	otherwise	On Tuesdays Mandela Foods delivers fresh fruits and vegetables to corner stores in West Oakland; otherwise, people have to travel a great distance to buy produce.
Choice or Alternative	alternatively, on the other hand, conversely	Community gardens are one solution to food deserts; on the other hand, it's not always realistic that people will have the time and energy to grow food for themselves.

Licenses and Attributions

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Clara Hodges Zimmerman, Porterville College. License: CC BY NC.

Some examples of coordination and transition words adapted from ["Accessibility and Affordability of Healthy Food Dependent Upon Socioeconomic Status"](#), an essay by Amanda Wu. License: CC BY.

CC Licensed Content: Previously published

"Using a Dictionary and Thesaurus" is adapted from 11.5: [Word Choice](#) in Athena Kashyap and Erika Dyquisto's text *Writing, Reading, and College Success: A First-Year Composition Course for All Learners*. License: CC BY SA.

"Coordination Cheat Sheet" and "Transitions Cheat Sheet" are adapted from 11.7: ["Coordination and Subordination"](#) in Athena Kashyap and Erika Dyquisto's text *Writing, Reading, and College Success: A First-Year Composition Course for All Learners*. License: CC BY SA.

This page titled [6.5: Language Toolkit](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

7: WORKING WITH EVIDENCE

7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence

7.2: Using Direct Quotes

7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases

7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence

Providing context

This section uses evidence from the article "[Why Being Bilingual Helps Keep Your Brain Fit](#)" by Gaia Vince.

Whenever you use a quoted or paraphrased piece of text evidence from another source, you need to introduce it with context. Sometimes beginning academic writers put a quote without any context. This is called "dumping a quote" or "a dropped quote."

Comparing quotations in a sample paragraph

Notice this!

Compare these two examples of text evidence used in a student paper:

"Bilingual people have significantly more grey matter than monolinguals in their anterior cingulate cortex, and that is because they are using it so much more often" (Abutalebi qtd. in Vince).

This fulfills the minimum requirement of citing the author's last name for the in-text citation, but as a reader, it leaves you wondering: Who is Abutalebi? Why are they included here? How do they know this? Why should we believe it?

Cognitive neuropsychologist Jubin Abutalebi, of the University of San Raffaele in Milan, Italy, has found through brain scans that "bilingual people have significantly more grey matter than monolinguals in their anterior cingulate cortex, and that is because they are using it so much more often" (qtd. in Vince). It may sound surprising that knowing two languages can literally change the actual physical structure of our brains, but that is the key to the mental benefits of bilingualism beyond the languages themselves. This extra gray matter makes our brains more flexible and resilient, and helps us understand other people better.

The second example tells us who Abutalebi is, gives his credentials, and categorizes the evidence as a research finding before telling us the actual evidence so, as readers, we are better prepared to understand the evidence and accept it as logical support. (Note: if the writer uses another quote or paraphrase from Abutalebi later in the paper, they can simply use his last name, because we already know who he is.) After the evidence, the writer has added some explanation so we as readers understand why the evidence is important and how it relates to the other parts of the writer's essay.

Context before the text evidence, and explanation after it, wrap the evidence up in an idea-package so that our readers can easily follow our meaning.

Many teachers use the metaphor of a sandwich, like the one pictured in Figure 4.7.1, to describe this pattern that places pieces of evidence from other sources inside our own sentences. The evidence is the filling of the sandwich, and the two pieces of bread are the context and explanation. We do not typically put text evidence in the topic sentence or in the last sentence of a body paragraph.

Using "according to"

The phrase "**according to**" means the same thing as "says," but the grammar pattern is different:

According to Vince, "Bilinguals rarely get confused between languages, but they may introduce the odd word or sentence of the other language if the person they are talking to also knows it."

According to several recent studies, bilinguals show more empathy and can guess other people's feelings more accurately.

According to Abutalebi, "The ACC is like a cognitive muscle . . . the more you use it, the stronger, bigger and more flexible it gets" (qtd. in Vince).

Notice that "according to" is used as a prepositional phrase, not a verb. Here's the pattern:

According to (source), (complete sentence, either a quote or paraphrase). (Citation if the source has a page number and/or didn't already say the author's name).

Be careful! The two most common mistakes students make are

- Using both a reporting verb and "according to":

Incorrect: According to Abutalebi, he reports that ...

Correct: According to Abutalebi, ... or Abutalebi reports that...

- Failing to place a complete sentence after "according to:"

Incorrect: According to Abutalebi, the greater flexibility of the bilingual brain.

Correct: According to Abutalebi, the bilingual brain is more flexible.

Reporting words with special meanings

If the source writer makes a generalization based on their observations, you can use "observe":

observe: Science editor Gaia Vince observes, "Being so bound up with identity, language is also deeply political."

If the source writer makes a special point to focus the reader's attention, you can use "point out":

point out: Science editor Gaia Vince points out, "Bilingualism can also offer protection after brain injury."

If the source writer says the same thing as another source that you have just referred to, you can use "agrees" or "confirms":

agree: Cognitive neurologist Thomas Bak agrees that multilingualism was more common in human history than monolingualism.

confirm: Experiments by Panos Athanasopoulos at Lancaster University confirm that the way we describe a situation can change depending on which language we are using.

If the source writer refers to another source, you can use "cite":

cite: Vince cites psycholinguist Susan Ervin-Tripp, whose work with Japanese-English bilingual women in the 1960s led her to believe that "human thought takes place within language mindsets, and that bilinguals have different mindsets for each language."

If the source writer gives careful reasons for their idea, you can use "explain":

explain: Abutalebi explains, "The ACC is like a cognitive muscle.....: the more you use it, the stronger, bigger and more flexible it gets."

If the source writer emphasizes something which not everybody agrees about, you can use "maintain," "insist," or "argue":

maintain: Bak maintains that "the detractors have made errors in their experimental methods."

insist: Language expert Alex Rawlings insists that it is actually easier to learn new languages as an adult than as a child.

argue: Vince argues that European imperialism may have led to the false belief that encouraging bilingualism in children is harmful.

If the source writer makes a statement based on research evidence, you can use "conclude" or "show":

conclude: From her research on aging bilinguals at York University, psycholinguist Ellen Bialystok concludes that being bilingual can delay the onset of dementia by about five years.

show: A study in 1962 by Peal and Lambert showed, "Bilingual children did better than monolinguals in both verbal and non-verbal intelligence tests."

If the source writer says something in passing that is not their main point, but that you want to include in your own paper, you can use "mention":

mention: Vince mentions that "one estimate puts the value of knowing a second language at up to \$128,000 over 40 years."

If the source writer talks about future possibilities, you can use "predict," "warn," or "hope," depending on the meaning:

predict: Vince predicts, "Being bilingual could keep our minds working longer and better into old age, which could have a massive impact on how we school our children and treat older people."

warn: Vince warns that "in a world that is losing languages faster than ever – at the current rate of one a fortnight, half our languages will be extinct by the end of the century."

hope: Bialystok hopes that education systems will encourage children to grow up bilingual, "considering the very many social and cultural benefits to knowing another language."

If the source writer discusses an idea or gives evidence for it, but is not 100% definite about it, you can use "suggest":

suggest: Bialystok suggests that dementia may be delayed "because bilingualism rewires the brain and improves the executive system."

If the source writer does not believe something to be true, you can use "deny," "doubt," or "question":

deny: Some educators deny the necessity of bilingualism, and still discourage immigrant parents from raising their children with both languages.

doubt: Some policymakers doubt the benefits of bilingualism, despite the support of extensive research.

question: Bak questions the methods of the researchers who claim bilingualism does not have cognitive benefits.

If the source writer is asking a question, you can use "ask" or "wonder." (note that this is a different meaning than "question"—"question" has the special meaning of "doubt" or "criticize" in academic language.)

ask: Vince asks, "What will happen if the current rich diversity of languages disappears and most of us end up speaking only one?"

wonder: Vince wonders whether there are "really two separate minds in a bilingual brain."

If the source writer is making a concession or describing a different perspective, you can use "admit" or "acknowledge":

admit: Vince admits that she struggled to learn the new language.

acknowledge: Vince acknowledges that many educators still discourage students from keeping their home language.

Choosing effective reporting words

Let's take a look at the reporting words the author used in the article to introduce her evidence.

Try this!

Here are some sentences from the article "[Why Being Bilingual Helps Keep Your Brain Fit](#)" by Gaia Vince. The reporting word(s) have been replaced with the letter "X". Guess which word(s) she used to introduce the quote or paraphrase, out of the three choices in brackets at the end of each sentence. Think about what kind of an idea the evidence is - is it a fact? an opinion? a conclusion? Also use the grammar pattern as a clue.

1. "If you look at modern hunter-gatherers, they are almost all multilingual," X Thomas Bak. [doubts/ says/ concludes]
2. "From this [study], Ervin-Tripp X that human thought takes place within language mindsets, and that bilinguals have different mindsets for each language..." [concludes/ insists/ warns]
3. "When I did the same test again after completing the . . . task, I was significantly better at it, just as Athanasopoulos has predicted. 'Learning the new language improved your performance the second time around,' he X. [denies/ explains/ argues]
4. "The result of my test in Athanasopoulos's lab X that just 45 minutes of trying to understand another language can improve cognitive function." [questions/ maintains/ suggests]
5. "Strowger X me that the program has had many benefits in addition to their grades, including improving students' engagement and enjoyment, increasing their awareness of other cultures so that they are equipped as global citizens, widening their horizons, and improving their job prospects." [tells/ says/ according to]

For answers, see [4.12: Integrating Evidence Answer Key](#)

Explaining text evidence

Writers typically add at least a sentence or two of explanation after quoted or paraphrased text evidence to explain why the evidence is important and how it connects to the topic sentence or other point, and thus supports the overall thesis. Sometimes teachers call this part "analysis" or "significance."

What should I write in the explanation?

Your explanation may include any of the following:

- interpretation: what is the deeper meaning of the evidence?
- emphasis/impact: why is the evidence so important?
- cause-effect: what are the reasons for or consequences of the evidence?
- comparison: how is this thing/situation/solution similar to or different from something else?
- condition: if/unless one thing is/isn't true, then what?
- evaluation: why is this a better/worse situation/solution than another?
- personal connection: (if it's appropriate for the class/assignment)

What should I not write in the explanation?

Your explanation should not do any of these:

- nothing—your paragraph ends with evidence
- repeat the evidence or context
- say what happened next in a story or in reality
- use personal experience if not allowed for the assignment/class

How can I start my explanation sentences?

Here are a few possible sentence starters:

- In other words, his/her/their point is.....
- As this quote/example shows....
- Basically, X is saying Y.
- *[the author's]* point is that Y.
- The essence of *[the author's]* argument is that Y.
- Given these findings, ...
- Based on this surprising increase/decrease, ...

Applying the sandwich pattern

Let's apply this to your own writing.

Apply this!

Look at your own or a classmate's draft. Find each piece of quoted or paraphrased text evidence. Ask these questions, and then see what you can add/improve:

- Is each piece of text evidence introduced with a source and reporting words?
- The first time a source appears, did the writer include a credential? (Who is this source, and why should we believe them?)
- Do the reporting words accurately give us a clue about the meaning/type of evidence? (For example, if it says, "Nguyen argues . . . ," is the thing Nguyen said actually an argument rather than a fact?)
- Do the reporting words follow a correct grammar pattern?
- Did the writer add an explanation after the evidence?
- Does the explanation explain the importance of the evidence and connect the evidence to the point?

Licenses and Attributions

Authored by Anne Agard, Laney College and Gabriel Winer, Berkeley City College. License: CC BY NC.

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

Sample sentences are from "[Why Being Bilingual Helps Keep Your Brain Fit](#)" published on [Mosaic](#) and licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#).

7.2: Using Direct Quotes

What are Direct Quotes?

Direct quotes are portions of a text taken **word for word** and placed inside of a work. Readers know when an author is using a direct quote because it is denoted by the use of quotation marks and an in-text citation.

Example of a direct quote:

In his seminal work, David Bartholomae argues that “Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion-invent the university...”(4).

Direct quotes might also be formatted as a “block quote,” which occurs if the borrowed language is longer than four (4) lines of text. In MLA, A block quote requires the author to indent the borrowed language by 1/2 an inch, place the citation at the end of the block, and remove quotation marks.

Example of a block quote:

In his seminal work, David Bartholomae argues that

Every time a student sits down to write for us, he has to invent the university for the occasion-invent the university, that is, or a branch of it, like History or Anthropology or Economics or English. He has to learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community. (4)

Be sure to be careful when quoting directly because failing to write the text exactly as it appears in the original text is not an ethical use of direct quotes. Also, failing to bracket the quote with quotation marks and/or citing it inside the text is also unethical and both mistakes are a form of plagiarism.

When Should I Use Direct Quotes?

Generally, direct quotes should be used sparingly because you want to rely on your own understanding of material and avoid over-relying on another's words. Over quoting does not reinforce your credibility as an author; however, you should use direct quotes when “the author you are quoting has coined a term unique to her or his research and relevant within your own paper”(The Owl of [Purdue](#)).

The Basics of Directly Quoting

1. All quoted material should be enclosed in quotations marks to set it off from the rest of the text. The exception to this is block quotes, which require different formatting.
2. Quoted material should be an accurate word-for-word reproduction from the author's original text. You cannot alter any wording or any spelling. If you must do so, you must use a bracket or an ellipsis (see number 2 in the section below).
3. A clear signal phrase/attribution tag should precede each quotation.
4. A parenthetical citation should follow each quotation.

The Hard Part of Directly Quoting: Integrating Quotes into Your Writing

1. You, as the author of your essay, should explain the significance of each quotation to your reader. This goes far beyond simply including a signal phrase. Explaining the significance means indicating how the quoted material supports the point you are making in that paragraph. Remember: just because you add a quote does not mean that you have made your point. Quotes never speak for themselves. How and why does that quoted material make the point you think it does? Here are some helpful phrases for explaining quoted materials. “X” is the author's last name

1. (quoted material). What X's point demonstrates is that . . .
 2. (quoted material). Here, X is not simply stating _____, she is also demonstrating _____.
 3. (quoted material). This is an example of _____ because _____.
 4. (quoted material). This statement clearly shows _____ because _____.
 5. It may be helpful to visit [Chapter 4.3](#) for more information about building strong paragraphs in which you not only provide evidence (such as quotes), but also explain that evidence.
2. Sometimes, in order to smoothly integrate quoted material into your paper, you may need to remove a word or add a word to make the quote make sense. If you make any change to quoted material, it must be formatted correctly using an ellipsis or brackets
1. Use brackets [these are brackets] to change a word. [This article](#) from [Writing Commons](#) explains what brackets are and how to use them
 2. Use an ellipsis (this is an ellipsis...) to indicate omissions. [This article](#) from [Writing Commons](#) explains what brackets are and how to use them
3. When in doubt, strive to allow your voice – not a quote from a source – to begin each paragraph, precede each quote, follow each quote, and end each paragraph. Quotes that are integrated well into a paper allow you to control the paper. That is what a reader wants to see: your ideas and the way that you engage sources to shape and discuss your ideas.

Attributions

[11.2 Quoting](#) by Melanie Gagich is licensed (CC BY) under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

This chapter contains material from “[About Writing: A Guide](#)” by Robin Jeffrey, [OpenOregon Educational Resources](#), [Higher Education Coordination Commission: Office of Community Colleges and Workforce Development](#) is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](#). It also contains an excerpt from David Bartholomae’s “Inventing the University.”

7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases

How do I include quotations and paraphrases in my essay?

A [signal phrase](#), also known as an attributive tag, is a device used to smoothly integrate quotations and paraphrases into your essay. It is important to use signal phrases to clearly attribute supporting evidence to its author or authors and to avoid interrupting the flow of an essay. Signal phrases can also be used as meaningful transitions, moving your readers between your ideas and those of your sources.

A signal phrase consists of an author's name and an active verb indicating how the author is presenting the material. A signal phrase may also include information explaining an author's credentials and/or affiliations as well as the title and/or publisher of the source text.

Referring to the Author within a Signal Phrase

In many instances, [signal phrases](#) will contain only the last name of the author of the source text (as opposed to the author's first *and* last name). For instance, APA style guidelines require no reference to author first names at any point in an essay. But in MLA papers, if you are referring to an author for the first time in your essay, you should include that author's first name as well as the author's relevant credentials or affiliations in your signal phrase (you might also want to include the title of the source text). Once you have supplied an author's first name and credentials, any subsequent [signal phrase](#) referencing that same author should contain the author's last name only. For example:

- Michael Pollan, Professor of Science and Environmental Journalism at the University of California Berkeley, observes that “Americans today are having a national conversation about food and agriculture that would have been impossible to imagine even a few short years ago” (29).
- Pollan continues, “But the national conversation unfolding around the subject of food and farming really began in the 1970s” (29).

Notice how each [signal phrase](#) verb is followed by the word “that” or a comma, which is then followed by one space before the opening quotation mark.

In essays written according to MLA and APA guidelines, it is acceptable to refer to an author as “the author” as long as it is perfectly clear to whom you are referring. In APA, it is common to see references to “the researchers.”

Signal Phrase Verb Tense (MLA vs. APA style)

In the examples above, notice how the [signal phrase](#) verbs are written in present tense. When you are asked to write a paper that follows MLA guidelines, signal phrases should always be written in present (not past) tense. When writing a paper using APA style, [signal phrase](#) verbs should be written in past tense. For example:

- Pollan (2009) observed that “Americans today are having a national conversation about food and agriculture that would have been impossible to imagine even a few short years ago” (p. 29).

Notice how APA in-text citations also differ from MLA style in that APA citations include the year of publication and the page number is preceded by a “p.”

See [section 12.6](#) for more information on APA in-text citations and [section 12.2](#) for MLA citations.

Varying Your Verbs

You should also vary your [signal phrase](#) verbs (rather than simply using “states” throughout your entire essay) in order to maintain your readers' interest and to indicate the author's intended use of the excerpted material. See below for examples of strong [signal phrase](#) verbs.

Types of Signal Phrases

In most instances, the first time the author is mentioned in an MLA-style essay, as well as including the author's first *and* last name in a signal phrase, it is also a good idea to include the author's credentials and the title of the source.

While providing the author's credentials and title of the source are the most common types of signal phrases, there are others we should be aware of. In the examples below, the information relevant to the type of signal phrase is underlined.

1. Author's credentials are indicated.
 - **Example:** Grace Chapmen, Curator of Human Health & Evolutionary Medicine at the Springfield Natural History Museum, explains...
 - **Purpose:** Presenting an author's credentials should help build credibility for the passage you are about to present. Including the author's credentials gives your readers a reason to consider your [sources](#).
2. Author's *lack of* credentials is indicated.
 - **Example:** Matthew Spencer, whose background is in marriage counseling, not foreign policy, claims...
 - **Purpose:** Identifying an author's lack of credentials in a given area can help illustrate a lack of authority on the subject matter and persuade the audience not to adopt the author's ideas. Pointing to an author's lack of credentials can be beneficial when developing your response to counter-arguments.
3. Author's social or political stance, if necessary to the content, is explained.
 - **Example:** Employing nonviolent civil disobedience, Roland Hayes, prominent civil rights activist, preaches...
 - **Example:** Ralph Spencer, who has ties to the White Nationalist movement, denies...
 - **Purpose:** Explaining the author's social or political stance can help a reader to understand why that author expresses a particular view. This understanding can positively or negatively influence an audience. Be careful to avoid engaging in logical fallacies such as loaded language.
4. Publisher of the source is identified.
 - **Example:** According to a recent *CNN* poll...
 - **Purpose:** Identifying the publisher of the passage can help reinforce the credibility of the information presented and you can capitalize on the reputation/ credibility of the publisher of the source material.
5. Title of the Source is included.
 - **Example:** In "Understanding Human Behavior," Riley argues ...
 - **Purpose:** Informs the reader where the cited passage is being pulled from.
6. Information that establishes [context](#) is presented.
 - **Example:** In a speech presented during a Free Speech rally, Elaine Wallace encourages ...
 - **Purpose:** Presenting the [context](#) that the original information was presented can help the audience understand the author's purpose more clearly.

MLA Signal Phrase Verbs (present tense)

Acknowledges	Counters
Admits	Declares
Agrees	Denies
Argues	Disputes
Asserts	Emphasizes
Believes	Finds
Claims	Illustrates
Compares	Implies
Confirms	Insists
Comments	Maintains
Contents	Mentions

APA Signal Phrase Verbs (past tense)

Acknowledged	Countered
Admitted	Declared
Agreed	Denied
Argued	Disputed
Asserted	Emphasized
Believed	Found
Claimed	Illustrated
Compared	Implied
Confirmed	Insisted
Commented	Maintained
Contended	Mentioned

Attribution

[11.4 Signal Phrases](#) by John Lanning and Amanda Lloyd is licensed (CC BY) under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#), except where otherwise noted.

8: ACHIEVING YOUR FINAL DRAFT

8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade

8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals

8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words

8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument

8.5: Using Sentence Variety

This page titled [8: Achieving Your Final Draft](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade

Rhetorical appeals

How do we know whom to trust as we read? How can writers convince their readers of their opinions? Rhetoric is the art of effective, persuasive writing and speaking. Writers and speakers often use a combination of strategies to convince their audience of their opinion. Aristotle, a Greek philosopher who lived from 384–322 BC, outlined three methods used to get people to agree with them. He called these three rhetorical appeals: pathos, ethos, and logos. When we read a text or listen to a TED talk, for instance, we can often observe a combination of appeals. In academic writing, we tend to emphasize ethos and logos, but pathos and ethos are useful tools as well. For more about these appeals, see also [5.3: Distinguishing Rhetorical Appeals](#).

Pathos: emotions and values

With pathos, the writer or presenter's goal is to convince the audience of their particular opinion by appealing to their heart and emotions.

Some examples are stories, anecdotes, powerful use of words or phrases, or images that awaken a strong emotion such as anger, joy, or fear due to a person's beliefs.

Ethos: credibility and trust

The writer or presenter builds trust by presenting their argument in a thoughtful and thorough way and including expert opinion(s).

Some examples are introducing recognized experts with their credentials, citing sources accurately, including first-hand testimony, and using appropriate language (e.g., This suggests...)

Logos: logic

The writer or presenter develops their argument logically with evidence we can measure, count, or agree on.

Some examples include using facts, case studies, experiments, statistics, logical reasoning and organization, defining key terms, explaining ideas, and being objective.

Identifying rhetorical appeals in a text

We will explore how rhetorical appeals work by looking at three quotations from *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen*. Vargas (see Figure 1.7.1) came to the U.S. from the Philippines at age 12 and was surprised to find out at the age of 16 that he was in the U.S. as an undocumented immigrant. When he tried to get his driver's permit at the DMV, the person helping him told him his green card was a fake and he should not return. Vargas is a well-known journalist, filmmaker, and Pulitzer Prize winner.



Figure 8.1.1: "Jose Antonio Vargas" by MIT Media Lab is licensed under [CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Try this!

Identify which appeal is used in each quotation.

1. "Later that night, on a phone call with Mama, I demanded answers to questions I had never imagined I would have to ask. I found out that the "uncle" who accompanied me on the flight to America was a smuggler whom Lolo had paid. The morning I left the Philippines was so rushed because she hadn't known when I would be leaving. The smuggler didn't give an exact date or time. The plan was that the smuggler would call hours before my flight was set to depart. I had to be ready at all times. Unbeknownst to me, my suitcase has been packed for months."
2. "Another editor, Ann Gerhart, also known for her keen journalistic eye, and an ace fact-checker, Julie Tate, reported what I wrote, to make sure all the facts lined up."
3. "Annually, undocumented workers pay 12 billion to the Social Security Trust Fund."

Which appeals are most effective for you? Why?

(For possible answers, see [1.13: Answer Key - Critical Reading](#))

Interactive Element

Extra practice with rhetorical appeals

If you would like to learn more about Jose Antonio Vargas, watch this video. What types of appeals do you notice?

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

[View this YouTube Video online](#)



Works Cited

Vargas, Jose Antonio. *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen*. Dey Street Books, 2018.

Licenses and Attribution

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Marit ter Mate-Martinsen, Santa Barbara City College. License: CC BY NC.

All Rights Reserved

Three quotations by Jose Antonio Vargas are from *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen*.

8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals

What is rhetoric?

Rhetoric is the study of the art of persuasion and of how we apply that art to effective writing.

Why is rhetoric important?

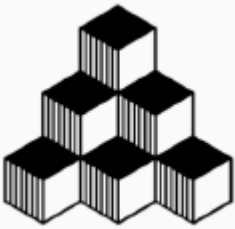
When you are writing an argument, you are helping your readers make a decision: the decision to agree with you, to understand, accept, and perhaps act on your main idea. You can appeal to their hearts, their trust, and their logic to encourage them to agree with you.

What are the 3 main rhetorical appeals?

Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher, described three ways of communicating that writers use to persuade their audience. He called these the three rhetorical appeals: pathos, ethos, and logos. To write an effective argumentative essay, you need to use all three appeals.

3 Main Rhetorical Appeals

Icon	Definition
 Figure 8.2.1: Pathos "Fingerprint Heart Swirls Love Unique Id Pattern" by Max Pixel is licensed under CC-0 1.0	Pathos (emotion) is about feelings—the writer connects to readers' values through emotion, senses, and story. Some examples are stories, anecdotes, powerful use of words or phrases, or images that awaken a strong emotion such as anger, joy, or fear due to a person's beliefs.

Icon	Definition
 Figure 8.2.2: Ethos "Integrity" by Adrien Coquet from NounProject.com is licensed under CC-BY	Ethos (trust) is about credibility—the writer builds trust by presenting their argument fairly and thoughtfully, and by using information from other expert sources. Some examples are introducing recognized experts with their credentials, citing sources accurately, including first-hand testimony, and using appropriate language (e.g., This suggests...)
 Figure 8.2.3 Logos "3d cubes" by Eliricon from the Noun Project is licensed under CC-BY	Logos (logic) is about logic—the writer sets up a solid structure of reasons with evidence. Some examples include using facts, case studies, experiments, statistics, logical reasoning and organization, defining key terms, explaining ideas, and being objective

Video: "Ethos, Pathos, and Logos"

The following video by Ricky Padilla from Texas A&M University Writing Center explains more about the three rhetorical appeals:

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

[View this YouTube Video online](#)



Identifying rhetorical appeals

Let's look at how these three appeals might be used in an essay:

Try this!

Imagine you are writing a paper to convince your readers that cheaply produced, low-quality clothing is a bad choice for consumers and that the clothing industry should be more regulated by governments. Here are some things you might include. Which ones are examples of *pathos*, *ethos*, or *logos*? (There is always some overlap, but look for clues: is the writer using emotion, senses, story? Are they working to appear fair, and to explain why we should trust a source? Are they presenting facts to support a claim?)

1. On March 25, 1911, a fire broke out in the Triangle Shirtwaist Company factory located next to Washington Square Park. With several of the main exits locked to prevent employees from stealing, only one exit was available and it was soon blocked by flames. Many workers succumbed to the heat and smoke while others, trapped by the growing fire, stepped out onto an eighth-floor ledge, and when the heat became unbearable, jumped off. Dozens of young women fell to their deaths on the pavement below, creating a horrific image that would transform the entire industry. It was the worst industrial accident in the history of the United States (Jimenez and Pulos).
2. Dr. Luz Claudio, the author of the study, is a neuroscientist, medical researcher, and professor of environmental medicine and public health at Mount Sinai University.
3. We can all agree that societies thrive when workers are paid enough to meet their basic needs. However, the workers in textile factories that supply fast fashion brands are paid as little as 40 cents an hour. Therefore, the practices of this industry are harming the societies where the factories are located.
4. Besides labor exploitation, another reason fast fashion is so destructive is that it leaves a pollution footprint, with each step of the clothing life cycle generating environmental hazards. For example, polyester, the most widely used manufactured fiber, is made from petroleum. With the rise in production in the fashion industry, demand for synthetic fibers, especially polyester, has nearly doubled in the last 15 years. The manufacture of polyester and other synthetic fabrics is an energy-intensive process requiring large amounts of crude oil and releasing emissions that can cause or aggravate respiratory diseases and contribute to the climate crisis. Other pollutants are released in the wastewater from polyester manufacturing plants, endangering the health of people in the surrounding communities (Claudio).
5. A 16-year-old walks into a brightly-lit store in a shopping plaza in Sacramento. She circles the racks full of crisp fabric, searching for a jacket that looks just like one from a recent fashion show in Paris. She finds it, looks at the tag, and is thrilled that it is in her size and only \$19.99, but pauses momentarily. She remembers something she read on Twitter that gave her nightmares, about a girl her exact age dying in a fire in a garment factory in Bangladesh. She tries to remember if the store she is in was one of the brands the factory was supplying.
6. It's true that there has been some incremental progress toward improving working conditions. In order to reduce the destructive actions of the fashion industry, some clothing companies have signed agreements, and some governments have passed laws requiring better worker protections. However, we cannot depend on written agreements if the factories do not follow them. We must also listen to the voices of the workers, including in courts, as they are the ones most directly impacted. As a former child worker and a blacklisted union organizer who now leads the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity, Kalpona Akter is certain: "Only a law that addresses the root causes of violations and has accountability at its core will truly transform and protect people's lives." She therefore calls on the Commissioners to introduce strong rules that also give victims of corporate abuses access to justice in European courts (Akter).

For suggested answers, see [5.12: Answer Key - Analyzing Arguments](#)

Rhetorical appeals in various texts

Now let's apply this to your own reading and writing:

Apply this!

Look for examples of pathos, ethos, and logos in advertisements, public service announcements, news articles, websites, and books.

Consider a paper you are working on or a classmate's paper you are reviewing. How can the writer add or improve elements of pathos, ethos, and logos?

In the following sections, we will learn more about pathos, ethos, and logos, and how to apply this knowledge to your reading and writing.

Works Cited

Akter, Kalpona. "Open Letter to European Commissioners: Kalpona Akter Calls for Strong Protections against Violations and Access to Justice for Victims." *Maquila Solidarity Network*, 29 July 2021.

Claudio, Luz. "Waste Couture: Environmental Impact of the Clothing Industry." *Environmental Health Perspectives*, vol. 115, no. 9, Sept. 2007, pp. A448–A454. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1289/ehp.115-a449.

Jimenez, Guillermo C., and Elizabeth Pulos. *Good Corporation, Bad Corporation: Corporate Social Responsibility in the Global Economy*. Open SUNY Textbook

Licenses and Attributions

Remixed by Talley Caruso (2025). The original version can be accessed for free at This page titled 5.3: Distinguishing Rhetorical Appeals is shared under a CC BY-NC 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Gabriel Winer & Elizabeth Wadell (ASCCC Open Educational Resources Initiative (OERI)).

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Gabriel Winer, Berkeley City College. License: CC BY NC.

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

Who was Aristotle? is adapted from [The Life of Aristotle](#) by Andrew Neciuk. License: CC BY.

Identifying rhetorical appeals:

Item 1 adapted from Jimenez, Guillermo C., and Elizabeth Pulos. *Good Corporation, Bad Corporation: Corporate Social Responsibility in the Global Economy*. Open SUNY Textbooks, 2014.

Item 4 adapted from Claudio, Luz. "Waste Couture: Environmental Impact of the Clothing Industry." *Environmental Health Perspectives*, vol. 115, no. 9, Sept. 2007, pp. A448–A454. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1289/ehp.115-a449.

Item 6 adapted from Akter, Kalpona. "Open Letter to European Commissioners: Kalpona Akter Calls for Strong Protections against Violations and Access to Justice for Victims." *Maquila Solidarity Network*, 29 July 2021. Licensed under CC-BY-NC-SA 2.5 CA.

Jimenez, Guillermo C., and Elizabeth Pulos. *Good Corporation, Bad Corporation: Corporate Social Responsibility in the Global Economy*. Open SUNY Textbooks, 2014, milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/good-corporation-bad-corporation/. Licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0.

Some Rights Reserved

Claudio, Luz. "Waste Couture: Environmental Impact of the Clothing Industry." *Environmental Health Perspectives*, vol. 115, no. 9, Sept. 2007, pp. A448–A454. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1289/ehp.115-a449. Reproduced from *Environmental Health Perspectives* with permission from the author.

All Rights Reserved

Padilla, Ricky, producer. *Ethos, Pathos & Logos*. Texas A&M University Writing Center, 2020.

This page titled [8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words

Each word counts. This is why, when you're revising your draft, you should pay special attention to the words you choose. Some choices will make your writing more effective than others.

Specific vs. general words

Choose words with specific meanings instead of general ones. For example, instead of "things," tell your reader what the "things" are. For example, instead of referring to the collection of vegetables in figure 6.5.1 as "things," or even "vegetables," consider being more specific, naming and describing them.



"Farmers Market" by ianmalcm is licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)

Specific Verbs

Instead of...	Try...
have	contain, provide, sell, offer, enjoy
change	adapt, adjust, modify, transform
add	increase, expand, extend, incorporate
reduce	decrease, simplify, optimize, minimize

make better	improve, enhance, upgrade, refine
make worse	worsen, complicate, aggravate, exacerbate
say	point out, highlight, mention, express
see	notice, observe, recognize, detect
get	receive, obtain, acquire, gain, secure
help	support, assist, encourage, facilitate
need	depend on, lack, rely on

Strong verbs

Strong verbs show **action** that your reader can easily imagine. Good writing has life, energy, and detail. Strong, active verbs add these qualities to your writing.

Avoid "state of being" verbs such as **be**, **do**, and **have**. These verbs reflect a state of being, rather than action. Find "state of being" verbs in your writing and convert some of them to active options where possible.

"State of being" Verbs	Examples of Weak Verbs
be	am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been
do	do, does, did, doing, done
have	have, has, had, having

Below are examples of weak "be" sentences transformed through using **strong** verbs.

Original Sentence	Revised Sentence
Ana is a nice girl.	Ana smiles at her classmates in the hall.

That dog is mean.	The dog growls at everyone he sees.
The weather is nice.	The sun shines in the blue sky.

Compare these two sentences. Which one is more precise and dynamic?

- The community garden's committee **made a decision** to revise the community guidelines.
- The community garden's committee **decided** to revise the community guidelines.

The second sentence conveys the same meaning with fewer words and more lively action.

Use Straightforward Language

Eliminate words that are not needed. State ideas only once within a single sentence instead of repeating a key idea in an attempt to clarify.

Original Sentence	Revised Sentence
The students made a decision to revise the community guidelines.	The students decided to revise the community guidelines.
The student who won the contest is a very talented and ambitious student.	The student who won the contest is very talented and ambitious.

Analyzing a paragraph for strong and specific words

Let's look at the student essay in terms of strong and specific words:

Try this!

Look again at the second paragraph of Amanda's essay, paying special attention to word choice.

- What are some effective choices Alicia has made?
- Can you identify some areas where her word choice could be improved?

It's tough for people of lower socioeconomic status to get healthy food because they cannot afford high-end organic food. According to American FactFinder, the median family income in West Oakland was 35,037 dollars in 2017, which is below the U.S. median family income of \$70,850. Based on this, residents in West Oakland are considered to be of a lower socioeconomic status. As mentioned previously, organic food has no chemical fertilizers or pesticides. Columbia Electronic

Encyclopedia, the 6th Edition. 2019, states that “organic farming requires more manual labor and attention” (“Organic Food”), so its price is higher than conventional food. Take salted butter as an example; one box of four bars of organic salted butter costs \$5.29, while one box of non-organic salted butter only costs \$3.49 (as listed on the Whole Foods website). Additionally, as reported by an article, “Socioeconomic Status and Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease: Impact of Dietary Mediators,” “Low-income families purchase low-cost items” because “the price of fruit and vegetables was the most determinative barrier in the consumption of these products from low-income families” (Psaltopoulou Chapter: 2.2. Cost). People with lower income may face difficulty living a self-sufficient life, much less purchasing good food.

Adapted from "[Accessibility and Affordability of Healthy Food Dependent Upon Socioeconomic Status](#)" by Amanda Wu

Revising for strong and specific words

Now let's apply this to your own writing:

Apply this!

Take a piece of writing you are working on and read it over.

- Think about your verb choice. Can you revise any weak verbs?
- Are there places where you can make your meaning clearer by using words with more specific meaning? A dictionary or thesaurus may be useful here. Check out information about using a dictionary or thesaurus in our [Language Toolkit](#).

Licenses and Attributions

Remixed by Talley Caruso (2025). The original version can be accessed for free at [6.5: Using Strong and Specific Words](#) is shared under a [not declared](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by [Gabriel Winer & Elizabeth Wadell](#) (ASCCC [Open Educational Resources Initiative \(OERI\)](#)) .

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Clara Hodges Zimmerman, Porterville College. License: CC BY NC.

Sample paragraphs on food deserts are adapted from "[Accessibility and Affordability of Healthy Food Dependent Upon Socioeconomic Status](#)" by Amanda Wu. License: CC BY.

CC Licensed Content: Previously published

"Strong verbs" and "Specific vs. general words" are adapted from 11.1 "[Academic Style](#)" in Athena Kashyap and Erika Dyquisto's text *Writing, Reading, and College Success: A First-Year Composition Course for All Learners*. License: CC BY SA.

This page titled [8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument

Reading about multiple perspectives

When we read an article or a book, we might imagine we are listening to the voice of the author: one voice (or maybe two or a few voices if there are multiple authors). That one voice is always speaking from a particular point of view, from within a particular culture, and from inside a time period. The author is also not speaking alone, to an empty room. As we read, we can also imagine we are listening to that speaker take their turn in a huge and timeless discussion with thousands of participants, in which the speakers build on and evaluate each others' ideas and argue with each other. Each new study, article, or book adds facts, ideas, and layers of meaning to the discussion. This exchange of ideas, with each new contribution referencing past texts, has been called "the Great Conversation."

Traditionally, many people talk about this "Great Conversation" as something that happens in the Liberal Arts disciplines of Western (European and American) universities: subjects like philosophy, literature, history, the social sciences, and the arts. Scholars discuss competing explanations for a historical event, or the meaning of a line in a poem, or whether a government policy is fair. But great conversations about truth, meaning, and justice also happen around the world and outside of formal academic discourse. They take place on Twitter and TikTok, in movies, in popular magazines, and in street protests, such as the one in Figure 5.8.1. Many texts you read in college classes are taking their turn in this imaginary discussion: they argue for their position, and explain and respond to other perspectives on the topic.



Figure 8.4.1: *Untitled* by SEIU Local 1 is licensed under CC-BY 2.0. Protesters in 2013 demanded that retail stores in the U.S. join the Bangladesh Safety Accord.

Let's look at an example:

Noticing multiple perspectives

Notice this!

As you read this article, ask yourself

- What is the writers' thesis?
- What other positions do they explain and then fight back against?
- Where are the places where the writers shift perspectives?

- Which connecting words signal the change?

Reading from an online magazine: 'Plastic-free' fashion is not as clean or green as it seems

We have all become more aware of the environmental impact of our clothing choices. The fashion industry has seen a rise in “green”, “eco” and “sustainable” clothing. This includes an increase in the use of natural fibres, such as wool, hemp, and cotton, as synthetic fabrics, like polyester, acrylic and nylon, have been vilified by some.

However, the push to go “natural” obscures a more complex picture.

Natural fibres in fashion garments are products of multiple transformation processes, most of which are reliant on intensive manufacturing as well as advanced chemical manipulation. While they are presumed to biodegrade, the extent to which they do has been contested by a handful of studies. Natural fibres can be preserved over centuries and even millennia in certain environments. Where fibres are found to degrade they may release chemicals, for example from dyes, into the environment.

When they have been found in environmental samples, natural textile fibres are often present in comparable concentrations than their plastic alternatives. Yet, very little is known of their environmental impact. Therefore, until they do biodegrade, natural fibres will present the same physical threat as plastic fibres. And, unlike plastic fibres, the interactions between natural fibres and common chemical pollutants and pathogens are not fully understood.

Fashion's environmental footprint

It is within this scientific context that fashion's marketing of alternative fibre use is problematic. However well-intentioned, moves to find alternatives to plastic fibres pose real risks of exacerbating the unknown environmental impacts of non-plastic particles.

To assert that all these problems can be resolved by buying “natural” simplifies the environmental crisis we face. To promote different fibre use without fully understanding its environmental ramifications suggests a disingenuous engagement with environmental action. It incites “superficial green” purchasing that exploits a culture of plastic anxiety. Their message is clear: buy differently, buy “better”, but don't stop buying.

Yet the “better” and “alternative” fashion products are not without complex social and environmental injustices. Cotton, for example, is widely grown in countries with little legislation protecting the environment and human health.

The drying up of the Aral Sea in central Asia, formally the fourth largest lake in the world, is associated with the irrigation of cotton fields that dry up the rivers that feed it. This has decimated biodiversity and devastated the region's fishing industry. The processing of natural fibres into garments is also a major source of chemical pollution, where factory wastewaters are discharged into freshwater systems, often with little or no treatment.

Organic cotton and Woolmark wool are perhaps the most well-known natural fabrics being used. Their certified fibres represent a welcomed material change, introducing to the marketplace new fibres that have codified, improved production standards. However, they still contribute fibrous particles into the environment over their lifetime.

More generally, fashion's systemic low pay, deadly working conditions, and extreme environmental degradation demonstrate that too often our affordable fashion purchases come at a higher price to somebody and somewhere.

Slow down fast fashion

It is clear then that a radical change to our purchasing habits is required to address fashion's environmental crisis. A crisis that is not defined by plastic pollution alone.

We must reassess and change our attitudes towards our clothing and reform the whole lifecycle of our garments. This means making differently, buying less and buying second hand. It also means owning for longer, repurposing, remaking and mending.

Fashion's role in the plastic pollution problem has contributed to emotive headlines, in which purchasing plastic-fibred clothing has become highly moralised. In buying plastic-fibred garments, consumers are framed complicit in poisoning the oceans and food supply. These limited discourses shift accountability onto the consumer to "buy natural". However, they do little to equally challenge the environmental and social ills of these natural fibres and the retailers' responsibilities to them.

The increased availability of these "natural" fashion products therefore fails to fundamentally challenge the industry's most polluting logic – fast, continual consumption and speedy routine discard. This only entrenches a purchasable, commodified form of environmental action – "buying natural". It stops the more fundamental reassessment of fast fashion's "business as usual", that we must slow.

Thomas Stanton, PhD researcher in the Geography and Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering, [University of Nottingham](#) and Kieran Phelan, PhD Researcher in economic geography, [University of Nottingham](#)

This article is republished from [The Conversation](#) under a Creative Commons license. Read the [original article](#).

When you write a paper, you are contributing to this "Great Conversation," and you also have to make these same moves. In an argumentative paper, you argue for your own perspective and support your main idea with evidence from other writers who agree with you. However, another important part of your job is to explain other points of view on the topic and respond to them with counterargument and/or concession.

Writing about multiple perspectives

Which perspectives should I include?

Sometimes, if you are writing about a controversial topic with clear opposite sides, it will be easy to identify different perspectives. It's like a debate. Here's an example:

- Thesis: The government should strengthen regulations on water pollution from factories.
- Opposite perspective: Opponents of this plan argue that regulations are not an effective way to reduce pollution.

But "multiple perspectives" doesn't always mean "opposite perspectives." The big questions we think deeply about often lead to more complicated discussions. If you have a more nuanced thesis, it might be harder to think of what the other perspectives are. Here's an example:

- Thesis: Although labor conditions in sweatshops are clearly human rights violations that demand international action, boycotts are actually not the most effective strategy to improve the situation.
- Exploring another perspective: It's true that labor conditions are terrible; workers, sometimes children, work long hours in dangerous factories for low pay.
- Exploring another perspective: Admittedly, many human rights advocates have called for boycotts.
- Exploring another perspective: Granted, boycotts have sometimes been an effective tool for reducing worker exploitation in other industries.

As you research and draft your paper, ask yourself—and your sources—these questions:

- Not everyone agrees with my idea.
 - Who? Are they credible sources?
 - Why? Is there anything valid about their position? Is it based on values that you (and probably your reader) reject?
 - What evidence do they use? Is it solid? Does it actually support their position?
 - Is their position logical? Did they use any logical fallacies?
- Is there any factual evidence that seems to contradict my idea?
- What is a problem or concern with my idea? What are some drawbacks?
- What are the limits to my idea?
- What is an exception to my idea?
- What are some possible bad consequences that could result from my idea or plan?
- Why will my idea or plan be hard to do?
- If my idea or plan is so great, why isn't everyone already doing it?

How do multiple perspectives make an argument stronger?

Wait—why would you want to talk about the positions of people who think you're wrong? Wouldn't that weaken your argument?

Actually, no. Carefully explaining the other sides of the topic builds both *ethos* and *logos*. Imagine your reader reading your paper, taking in your reasons for why your thesis is true, and saying to themselves, "But what about this problem?" or "I heard that was a bad idea because..." You are communicating to your reader: "See? In case you don't believe me, I already thought about the other sides. Here's what my opponents say, and here's why I'm still right!"

Where do multiple perspectives go in a paper?

In journalistic articles like "['Plastic-free' Fashion is Not as Clean or Green as it Seems](#)," writers often jump back and forth between perspectives throughout the text. A customary U.S. college argumentative essay typically includes one or more separate body paragraphs dedicated to explaining and responding to perspectives besides your own. Depending on the logic of your ideas, the order of your body paragraphs might follow one of these patterns:

- other perspectives come first, before your regular body paragraphs, to take on readers' possible doubts and objections and get them out of the way before explaining more about your reasons.
- other perspectives come last, after you have made your main case and before your conclusion.
- other perspectives go before or after the particular regular body paragraph they relate to.

Your introduction should also touch on the existence of these other perspectives, and your thesis statement may also directly address them, but you do not need to list every specific perspective in the introduction.

What goes in this special kind of body paragraph?

You start these paragraphs by stating another perspective. Then you explain that idea with specific detail (and often text evidence). Then you respond to that idea in a way that strengthens your overall argument. You may respond to the other positions with one of these two strategies, or a combination of both:

- **counterargument:** the other position is wrong (this is also called refutation)
- **concession:** the other position is a little bit true, but overall I'm still right

The key to keeping it all clear is to use connecting words to show which side you are focusing on and when you are changing sides.

Table 5.8.1 provides ideas and possible language to write a paragraph naming, explaining, and responding to other perspectives:

Table 5.8.1: Language for concession and counterargument

Part of the paragraph	What to write	Possible language
Part 1 Topic sentence/point that names the other perspective: 1+ sentences	Start with connecting words and, if logical, reporting words to make clear that you are switching to a perspective that is not your own opinion. State • an opposite idea • a question about, concern about, or problem with your idea • an exception to your idea • the inherency (if your idea/plan is so great, why isn't everyone already doing it?) If this is not your first concession/counterargument paragraph, make that clear with connecting words that add ideas (Another..., ...also..., In addition, ...)	• However, • One objection to [my idea] is that. . . • Some argue that... • Opponents of [my idea] argue that. . . • Supporters of [opposite idea] note/ point out that... • Proponents of [opposite idea] believe. . . • Those against [my idea] disagree with [part of my idea] • Skeptics of [my idea] contend that... • Critics of [my idea] accuse [someone] of [verb]ing. . . • Not everyone agrees with/ that [my idea]. Some point out that... • Here's another perspective: . . . • It's true that. . . • Granted, . . . • Of course, . . . • Still, . . . • That said, . . .
Part 2 Evidence/specific information that supports the other perspective: 2+ sentences	Give evidence/specifics of this other perspective: • why do they think this? • how many think this? • quote/paraphrase from someone who thinks this • give specific details about the point (e.g. if the problem is that your idea is expensive, how much money will it cost?) and explain their point of view, being careful to sound fair and balanced.	• For example, . . . • In fact, . . . • To illustrate, . . . • Indeed, . . . • According to . . . • They cite research showing that. . . • A study from the University of Chicago found that . . . • Because of this, many feel . . . • They indeed have a point that . . . • It's understandable that people worry about . . .

Part of the paragraph	What to write	Possible language
Part 3 Response that defends and explains your position: 2+ sentences	Start with connecting words and, if logical, reporting words to make clear that we are now back to your own position. Explain why the other perspective • is not true • is biased • is using a logical fallacy • is true but not that important, not worth the cost, etc. • is true, but the evidence actually proves your side or otherwise respond in a way that shows your position is still stronger.	• However, . . . • Nevertheless, . . . • Still, . . . • Yet . . . • That said, . . . • This may be true, but. . . • Even if this is true, . . . • On the other hand, . . . • Despite this disadvantage/side effect/risk/problem . . . • Although X is a concern, overall/ultimately. . . • Just because X doesn't mean Y • If X were true, Y wouldn't verb (present/general) • If X were true, Y wouldn't have verbed (past)

The models in Figure 5.8.2 are expressing two perspectives with their T-shirt slogans.



Figure 8.4.2: "Love Fashion Hate Sweatshops" by War on Want is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

Concession/counterargument in action

Let's look at an example of a concession/counterargument paragraph in a student essay:

Try this!

Here is a concession/counterargument paragraph from the student essay. The overall thesis of the whole essay is this:

Although some defend the fast fashion industry's aesthetic and economic contributions, it has devastating impacts on labor rights and the environment, and needs serious regulations by all nations to stop the damage.

Read the paragraph and look for the following elements:

1. What other position do they explain and then fight back against?
2. Where are the places where the writer shifts perspectives?
3. Which connecting words signal the change?

Which parts are counterarguments, and which are concessions?

Despite the clear injustices of garment production, some argue that the fashion industry provides work to people with few better choices in developing countries. According to reporter Stephanie Vatz, companies began outsourcing clothing manufacturing jobs in the 1970s, and by 2013, only two percent of clothing was made in the U.S. The same lack of labor protections that allows terrible working conditions in developing countries also guarantees low labor costs that motivate U.S. companies to relocate their factory sources. Benjamin Powell, the director of the Free Market Institute, justifies sweatshop labor, insisting that this model is "part of the process that raises living standards and leads to better working conditions and development over time (qtd. in Ozdamar-Ertekin 3). This argument is compelling from a distance, but even if it may be true to some degree when we look at the history of economic development, it disregards the humanity of the garment workers. These people continue to work long hours in brutal conditions, generating huge profits for the factory and retail owners. Saying that their lives could be even worse without this exploitation is actually just an excuse for greed.

For suggested answers, see [5.12: Analyzing Arguments Answer Key](#)

Licenses and attributions

Authored by Gabriel Winer, Berkeley City College. License: CC BY NC.

Student essay paragraph from "Deadly Fashion" authored by Maroua Abdelghani and Ruri Tamimoto. License: CC BY NC

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

"'Plastic-free' Fashion is Not as Clean or Green as it Seems" is republished from [The Conversation](#), licensed under CC-BY-ND.

This page titled [8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

8.5: Using Sentence Variety

What is sentence variety?

Beyond individual word choices, the structure of your sentences also affects writing style. In this section, we will examine different sentence types. We will look at how sentence variety can contribute to interesting, effective writing and good academic style and how specific structures can highlight the relationships between ideas.

Sometimes a simple sentence gets an idea across best. In academic writing, however, writers often join their ideas to create compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences using coordination and subordination. This variety not only makes writing more lively and interesting, it also clarifies relationships between ideas. In agriculture, growing plants with different varieties, like the corn in figure 6.11.1, makes a crop more healthy and adaptable. Mixing up the types of sentence structures you use can do the same for your writing. We will look at four types of sentences: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences.



Figure 8.5.1: "Corn Diversity" by Global Crop Diversity Trust is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

Simple sentences

A **simple sentence** is made up of one independent clause. An independent clause has, minimally, a subject and a verb. It can also contain other elements that may be needed to express a complete thought.

Example: California is one of the world's leading almond producers.

Read this excerpt from Amanda's essay. Does anything stand out to you? What do you notice about the words and phrases Amanda uses?

The lack of accessibility and affordability may obstruct people of lower socioeconomic status. These places are called food deserts. People who live in food deserts cannot access healthy food. There are existing resources that they can make good use of to improve this situation. These resources include food hubs and community gardens.

Now, look at the revised version. What do you notice? Which version do you prefer? Why?

Although the lack of accessibility and affordability may obstruct people of lower socioeconomic status who live in food deserts access to healthy food, they can make good use of existing resources such as food hubs and community gardens to

improve this situation.

The original excerpt was written using only simple sentences. Writing that contains mostly simple sentences can be repetitive and a bit boring. Additionally, simple sentences may lack transitions that can clarify the relationship between ideas.

Compound sentences (coordination)

A compound sentence, which is an example of coordination, is made up of two independent clauses, connected in some way. Coordination joins two independent clauses that contain related ideas of equal importance.

Original sentences: California is one of the world's leading almond producers. Each year California exports many of its almonds.

In their current form, these two simple sentences contain two separate ideas that may or may not be related. To indicate a relationship between the two ideas, we can use the coordinating conjunction *and*:

Revised sentence: California is one of the world's leading almond producers, **and** each year California exports many of its almonds.

The revised sentence illustrates that the two ideas are connected. Notice that the sentence retains two independent clauses (*California is one of the world's leading almond producers; each year California exports many of its almonds*) because each can stand alone as a complete idea. However, the connecting word, *and*, shows that the second part of the sentence is an addition to the first.

Connecting independent clauses

Coordinating conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction is a word that joins two independent clauses. The coordinating conjunctions are *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*. These can be memorized by the acronym FANBOYS. Note that To punctuate these types of sentences, a comma precedes the coordinating conjunction when joining two clauses but not when joining a phrase (such as in this sentence).

Transitions

Another method of joining two independent clauses with related and equal ideas is to use a semicolon and a transition. The punctuation of a transition varies depending upon where in the sentence the adverb word appears. Once joined, the following sentences show cause and effect.

Original sentences: There was a shortage of PPE in 2020. Farmworkers did not have access to important protective equipment.

Since these sentences contain two equal and related ideas, they may be joined using a transition. Now, read the revised sentence:

Revised sentence: There was a shortage of PPE in 2020; as a result, farmworkers did not have access to important protective equipment.

The revised sentence explains the relationship between the shortage of personal protective equipment and its effect on farmworkers. Notice that the transition comes after a semicolon that separates the two clauses and is followed by a comma. In your [Language Toolkit](#), you will find a list of common transitions and how they are used.

Complex sentences (subordination)

A complex sentence, which is an example of subordination, is made up of an independent clause and a dependent clause. A dependent clause is a sentence that contains a subject and verb but is not a complete thought. It is also called a subordinate clause. Unlike coordination, which allows a writer to give equal weight to the two ideas that are being combined, subordination enables a writer to emphasize one idea over the other. Typically, the idea being emphasized is located in the independent clause.

Take a look at the following sentences:

Original sentences: California is one of the world's leading almond producers. It is dry for much of the year.

To illustrate that these two ideas are related, we can rewrite them as a single sentence using the subordinating conjunction *although*.

Revised sentence: California is one of the world's leading almond producers although the state is dry for much of the year.

In the revised version, we now have an independent clause (*California is one of the world's leading almond producers*) that stands as a complete sentence and a dependent clause (*although the state is dry for much of the year*) that is subordinate to the main clause. The revised sentence emphasizes that demand for water is increasing because this information is contained in the part of the sentence that is the independent clause.

Connecting an independent clause with a dependent clause

Subordinating conjunctions

A subordinating conjunction is a word that joins a subordinate (dependent) clause to a main (independent) clause. Subordinating conjunctions include words like *although*, *even though*, *since*, *because*, and *when*. In your [Language Toolkit](#), you will find a list of common subordinating conjunctions.

Punctuation

To punctuate sentences correctly, look at the position of the independent, or main clause and the dependent, or subordinate clause. If a dependent clause comes before the independent clause, use a comma between the two clauses. If the dependent clause follows the independent clause, no punctuation is needed.

Compound-complex sentences (coordination and subordination)

A **compound-complex sentence** is made up of at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses. In compound-complex sentences, writers use a combination of **coordination** and **subordination**.

Examples:

- Although it is dry for much of the year, California is one of the world's leading almond producers; each year, it supplies about 80% of the world's almonds.
- Because the United States was unprepared for a pandemic, there was a shortage of PPE in 2020; as a result, farmworkers did not have access to important protective equipment.

Varying your sentence types

Writers use a variety of sentences with different lengths and rhythms to achieve different effects. They use parallel structures within sentences and paragraphs to reflect parallel ideas, but also avoid monotony by varying their sentence structures. For example, a writer may consciously use a very short sentence in a paragraph to emphasize and draw attention to a particular idea. When you revise a piece of writing, consider the patterns of your sentences.

- Are they mostly simple sentences?
- Are they mostly compound?
- Or are the sentences varied in pattern?

Sentence variety can help maintain your readers' interest.

Identifying sentence variety

Now let's look at the student essay in terms of sentence variety:

Try this!

Read this paragraph from Amanda's essay.

- Count the number of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences you find. Is there a balance, or does Alicia use one type of sentence more than others?
- Experiment with this paragraph by changing the structure of one or two sentences. For example, you could combine two simple sentences, adding a subordinating conjunction, to create a complex sentence.

The goal of City Slicker Farms is "to empower West Oakland community members to meet the basic need for fresh, healthy food by creating sustainable, high-yield urban farms and backyard gardens" (para 1). Residents receive plots of land to plant vegetables and fruits. Residents are also encouraged to exchange and discuss their gardening experiences at the farm. If residents can make good use of food hubs or community gardens, they can access healthy food and learn how to grow fresh vegetables and fruits themselves. The earlier case study showed that the difficulties people of lower socioeconomic status who live in food deserts face in accessing healthy food are lower income and a lack of supermarkets. These factors may not be easy to change. However, recognizing the situation and making good use of existing resources to access healthy food are significant, feasible steps.

Revising for sentence variety

Now let's apply this to your writing:

Apply this!

Take a piece of writing you are working on and read it over.

- Count the number of simple, compound sentences, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Is there a balance? Are there noticeably more sentences of a certain type?
- Experiment with changing the structure of your sentences. Think about what ideas you want to emphasize, and make sure your sentences are helping you do this work.

Licenses and Attributions

CC Licensed Content: Original

Authored by Clara Hodges Zimmerman, Porterville College. License: CC BY NC.

Sample paragraphs on food deserts are adapted from "Accessibility and Affordability of Healthy Food Dependent Upon Socioeconomic Status" by Amanda Wu.

CC Licensed Content: Previously published

"What is sentence variety?", "Four types of sentences", "Simple sentences," and "Compound sentences (coordination)" is adapted from 11.7: "[Coordination and Subordination](#)" in Athena Kashyap and Erika Dyquisto's text *Writing, Reading, and College Success: A First-Year Composition Course for All Learners*. License: CC BY SA.

Additional text from "Connecting independent clauses" to "Varying your sentence types" is adapted from 7.4 "[Revision Stage 3: Sentences, Words, Format](#)" in Athena Kashyap and Erika Dyquisto's text *Writing, Reading, and College Success: A First-Year*

9: Reflecting on Your Work

Reflecting on The Writing Process

You have just turned in the final draft of your essay. Great job! Take a moment to think about what you have accomplished.

Write 300 words about your experience. What went well? What would you change next time?

What helped you the most? Was it the teacher conference, peer review, self-editing checklist, or something else? When did you feel the most productive? What kind of support would help you improve? Remember to write in full sentences (not bullet points).

Grading

For this assignment to be marked as Complete it must contain the following:

- Minimum of 300 words, written by YOU, in full sentences in English (no translator, AI, or plagiarism allowed)
- Answers the questions listed in the assignment

10: EXPLORING ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

10.1: Evaluating Your Sources

10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities

10.3: Reflection Essay

This page titled [10: Exploring Additional Resources](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

10.1: Evaluating Your Sources

Why you need to evaluate

As you gather sources for your research, you may find that different sources give you different or opposing information. How can you know what information to trust? How will you decide which sources to use and which ones not to use?

Keep in mind that the sources you find have all been put out there by groups, organizations, corporations, or individuals who have some motivation for getting this information to you. To be a good researcher, you need to learn how to assess the materials you find and determine their reliability—before deciding if you want to use them and, if so, how you want to use them. Figure 3.7.1 shows two students examining materials to determine reliability.



Figure 10.1.1: "Learning" by [CollegeDegrees360](#) is marked with [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).

Whether you are examining material in books, journals, magazines, newspapers, or websites, you want to consider several issues before deciding if and how to use the material you have found.

Criteria for evaluating sources

Table 3.7.1 gives a list of criteria to consider when you are deciding which sources to use, as well as some questions that can help you decide if your source meets the criteria.

Table 3.7.1 Criteria to use in evaluating sources and questions to ask for each criteria

Criteria	Description	Questions to Ask
Authority/ Credibility	Determining the author for a source is important in deciding whether information is credible. The author should show some evidence of being knowledgeable, reliable and truthful.	• Who is the author (person, company, or organization)? • Does the source provide any information that leads you to believe the author is an expert on the topic? • Can you describe the author's background (experience, education, knowledge)? • Does the author provide citations? Do you think they are reputable?
Accuracy	The source should contain accurate and up-to-date information that can be verified by other sources.	• Can facts or statistics be verified through another source? • Based on your knowledge, does the information seem accurate? Does it match the information found in other sources? • Are there spelling or grammatical errors?
Relevance	It is important that the source meets the information needs and requirements of your research assignment.	• Does the source cover your topic comprehensively or does it cover only one aspect? • To what extent does the source answer your research question? • Is the source considered popular or scholarly? • Is the terminology and language used easy to understand?
Currency/ Date	Some written works are ageless (e.g., classic literature) while others (e.g., technological news) become outdated quickly. It is important to determine if currency is pertinent to your research.	• When was the source written and published? • Has the information been updated recently? • Is currency pertinent to your research?
Objectivity/ Bias/ Reliability	Every author has an opinion. Recognizing this is instrumental in determining if the information presented is objective or biased.	• What is the purpose or motive for the source (educational, commercial, entertainment, promotional, etc.)? • Who is the intended audience? • Is the author pretending to be objective, but really trying to persuade, promote or sell something?

Criteria	Description	Questions to Ask
Style/Functionality	Style and functionality may be of lesser concern. However, if the source is not well-organized, its value is diminished.	• Is the source well-written and organized? • To what extent is it professional looking? • If it is a website, can you navigate it easily? • If it is a website, are links broken?

Practice evaluating sources

Let's evaluate two sources using table 3.7.1. Both of these articles are about teachers or faculty of color. Figure 3.7.2 shows an African American teacher helping a student.



Figure 10.1.1: "Student and Teacher" by Wonderlane is marked with CC BY 2.0.

Try this!

Here are two articles related to teachers of color. Read the citation and abstract and use the criteria and questions in table 3.7.1 to evaluate each one. Then, answer this question: Would this be a good source for my research paper on whether colleges need more faculty of color?

Source 1: "The Limited Presence of African-American Teachers."

Citation: King, Sabrina Hope. "The Limited Presence of African-American Teachers." *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 63, no. 2, [Sage Publications, Inc., American Educational Research Association], 1993, pp. 115–49, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1170470>.

Author: Sabrina Hope King, Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago

Abstract: "The limited presence of talented African Americans in the teaching profession has been and continues to be a serious problem confronting the education profession and the African-American community in the United States. This review summarizes what is known from the research literature. It explores the reasons that African-American teachers are important as well as overall demographic, entry, and retention trends and the distinctive factors that influence the limited presence of African-American teachers. Finally, a suggested research agenda is presented."

Source 2: "Diversifying the Teaching Profession through High-Retention Pathways."

Citation: Carver-Thomas, Desiree. "Diversifying the Teaching Profession through High-Retention Pathways." *Learning Policy Institute*, 19 Apr. 2018, <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/...ofession-brief>.

Author: Desiree Carver-Thomas, Researcher and Policy Analyst at the Learning Policy Institute. She is also a former teacher. The Learning Policy Institute "conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice," according to its website. The website also lists who funded the research: "Research in this area of work is funded in part by the S. D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation. Core operating support for the Learning Policy Institute is provided by the Ford Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Sandler Foundation."

Abstract: "Research illustrates the importance of greater teacher diversity because of the substantial benefits teachers of color provide to all students, and to students of color in particular. Studies also show that policies must focus more effectively on retention of teachers of color, if diversity in the teaching profession is to be sustained. While more teachers of color are being recruited than in years past, their turnover rates are high, in part due to inadequate preparation and mentoring, poor teaching conditions, and displacement from the high-need schools in which they teach. Increasing the number of teachers of color in the workforce requires building high-retention pathways into the field that offer high-quality preparation and financial supports, including service scholarships, loan forgiveness programs, teacher residencies, Grow Your Own programs, ongoing mentorship, and other policies and strategies that improve teacher licensure, hiring, professional growth, and teaching conditions for current and aspiring teachers of color."

(For possible answers, check the [3.12: Answer Key - Research](#))

Here is a [Source Evaluation Checklist](#) that you can download and use.

Works Cited

Carver-Thomas, Desiree. "Diversifying the Teaching Profession through High-Retention Pathways." *Learning Policy Institute*, 19 Apr. 2018.

King, Sabrina Hope. "The Limited Presence of African-American Teachers." *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 63, no. 2, [Sage Publications, Inc., American Educational Research Association], 1993, pp. 115–49.

Licenses and Attributions

CC Licensed Content: Original

Activity Authored by Elizabeth Wadell, Laney College. License: CC BY NC.

CC Licensed Content: Previously Published

"Why you need to evaluate" adapted from Purdue OWL's [Evaluating Sources](#). License: CC BY.

Table 3.7.1 adapted from the University of Texas at Arlington's [Criteria for Evaluating Sources](#). License: CC BY NC.

Abstract of "Diversifying the Teaching Profession through High-Retention Pathways" is from the [Learning Policy Institute](#). License: CC BY NC.

All Rights Reserved

Abstract of Sabrina Hope King's "The Limited Presence of African-American Teachers."

This page titled [10.1: Evaluating Your Sources](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities

Possible assignments and activities by chapter

Note to instructors: these ideas are not intended to be comprehensive, but as possible starting places that may be useful to teachers new to the field, to integrated reading, writing, research, and reasoning, or to this level; we know you have your own themes, routines, and tasks for your students.

1: Critical Reading

Provide a reading from a current newspaper, a TED talk with a transcript, an excerpt of a textbook, or whatever reading the class is already assigned. Ask students to do any of the following with the text:

- Before reading, students skim the text and do the [4 Ps](#), first on their own and then with a partner/small group
- Before reading, students work with a partner/group to add ideas to a [KWL+ table](#). Some possible ways to do this:
 - make and print a handout with a table as in the chapter
 - project the handout on a whiteboard and have students write on the board
 - have them use Google docs to collaborate
 - simply have them make their own table on paper
- For classwork/homework, they read the text and complete the second two columns, then discuss on return or in an online discussion.
- [Questioning for active reading](#): Before reading, students skim the text and discuss their answers to the "Before Reading" questions with a partner/small group. For classwork/homework, ask them to choose a few questions from the "During Reading" and "After Reading" columns to write answers to, in an online discussion or as notes to bring to a class discussion. Also ask them to add their own questions. These answers can serve as the start of response journals, essays, debates, etc.
- Students [annotate the text](#), alone, in pairs, or in groups, using one of these methods:
 - traditional pen on paper
 - [Perusall](#)
 - GoogleDocs comments feature
- Students find the [topic, main idea, supporting reasons, and details](#), and discuss in groups.
- Jigsaw: Provide small groups of students with 2-4 different short readings on the same topic. They read, find the [topic, main idea, supporting reasons, and details](#) in their "home groups," then rearrange into groups with students who started with different texts. Then the new groups compare the main ideas/positions of the different texts.
- Students identify examples of [ethos, pathos, and logos](#) in the text in pairs/groups. They take turns reading an example they have found of one rhetorical appeal and having other teams guess which type it represents.
- Gallery walk: pairs or small groups of students write a [summary of the text](#) on poster paper or on a whiteboard. Then they circulate and discuss the accuracy of the other groups' summaries.
- Students [choose a few powerful quotes](#) from the reading and explain why they chose each. Collect the quotes, through an online discussion, a Google Doc, or on poster paper. Use [Socrative](#), [Poll Everywhere](#), the Zoom poll feature, or simply post-its/tallies to have students vote on which are the most powerful quotes, or which quote best supports an assertion.
- Students complete an [analysis paragraph](#) or [reading response journal](#), then share and discuss.
- Students post reading responses with quotes and analysis and respond to each other in an online discussion. Here is an example of instructions for [Reading Response canvas discussions](#).

2: Organization and Cohesion

- Students vote on the best [thesis statement](#) out of a few choices, all on the same topic, and justify their choices.
- Students read an essay with the thesis statement redacted and try to write one that fits.
- Students read the [introduction](#) and/or [conclusion](#) paragraphs from each other's papers, from a corpus such as the [Michigan Corpus of Upper-Level Papers](#), or from the beginnings of chapters in a book or articles in a magazine. They categorize the type of hook or "food for thought" the author used, and evaluate the effectiveness/suggest alternatives.
- Students do a gallery walk of sample [introduction](#) paragraphs and mark which ones do and do not have strong hooks, clear background knowledge, and argumentative thesis statements.
- Students write their [thesis statement](#) on papers or a Google document. Together, the class analyzes the statements to decide

if each is arguable, specific, and not just personal opinion, and comes up with ideas for improving those that need work.

- Students analyze [body paragraphs](#) written by classmates.
- Students read an essay with the topic sentences redacted and try to write ones that fit.
- Students do a reverse-outline with their own or another essay: make a copy of the draft (in a word program). Delete everything except the thesis statement and topic sentences. Does the remaining skeleton read like one logical paragraph (except the concession/counterargument ones - they might be a little illogical as stand-alone sentences)?
- Students create a [reverse outline](#) of their work, then use it to give a mini presentation to their peers. Finally, they take notes on areas that were difficult to prepare or confusing for peers. Alternatively, students can draw a picture of their essay showing the connections between different parts, and perhaps even creating some [bridges](#).
- Students read any text and identify/categorize the words that create [cohesion](#).
- Students read each other's drafts and identify places where transitions, demonstrative pronouns + summarizing nouns could add cohesion.
- Students read each other's drafts or list of topic sentences and help generate possible [bridges](#).
- Students visit stations with key questions for revising each section of their essay.

3: Research

- [Example short research paper assignment.docx](#)
- Loyola Marymount University has an excellent webpage with activities to walk students through the steps of [developing a research topic](#).
- Students bring or post their preliminary topic choices, then work in pairs/small groups to explore and refine their [research questions](#)
- Students work in pairs or small groups to develop a list of [keywords, synonyms, and subject search terms](#) for their research questions.
- Students evaluate a few sources on the same topic using this [Source Evaluation Checklist](#) from Excelsior OWL.
- As a preliminary step toward a research paper, assign an [annotated bibliography](#).
- Students write their research topics and [key words](#) on a forum or poster paper for a gallery walk. Peers respond by brainstorming their own key words to add.
- Students write their preliminary thesis on a discussion form or poster paper for a gallery walk. Peers write what they already know about this topic. Students use that information to plan how much background information to present and how best to persuade readers.

4: Integrating Evidence

- Students find and identify different [types of evidence](#) in an article
- Students identify and evaluate the [in-text citations](#) in classmates' drafts
- Students [choose the best text evidence](#) from an article to support a point.
- Students practice [introducing and explaining text evidence](#) in a reading-response journal
- Students compare an original text to a student paraphrase or summary and evaluate for possible [plagiarism](#)
- Kinesthetic introduction to MLA/Works Cited pages: Give students an essay and the citations for that essay cut into strips. Have students organize the citations in the way that makes the most sense to them and then check to see if it is correct. The goal is for students to inductively realize that connection between an in-text citation and Works Cited page citation so they can see how organizing the Works Cited page alphabetically by last name is logical for the reader.
- Format Fixing Gallery Walk: Print out the first pages and the Works Cited pages of several student paper drafts in progress (with names redacted). Tape them around the walls. Briefly review the rules for [general manuscript formatting and formatting the Works Cited page](#). Students circulate in small groups and put post-its with errors on classmates' papers. Then the authors collect their own papers with the post-its still attached.
- Students are given a paper draft that is missing evidence, as well as a few sample texts that they have already read that can be used to provide evidence. In groups, students make posters by physically cutting out quotations from the texts and pasting them onto the sample paper, adding introductions, square brackets, ellipses, and citations as appropriate. Then, students review the posters from other groups and discuss the different choices that were made.

5: Analyzing Arguments

- Slideshow: [Review of Rhetorical Appeals: Logos, Pathos, or Ethos](#)
- Students read a current opinion piece, TED talk with transcript, excerpt from a book, or classmates' essays.
 - They identify examples of [ethos, pathos, and logos](#) in pairs/groups or as an online discussion.

- Teams take turns reading out an example they have found of one rhetorical appeal and having other teams guess which type it represents.
- Students identify/explain how a writer uses similes, metaphors, imagery, and narrative examples to build *pathos* in expository texts. They add these elements to their own writing.
- Students identify and categorize ways the writer uses *ethos*
- Students uncover the *logical syllogisms* implicit in the argument
- Students find and explain any *logical fallacies*. [Note: this may work better if you provide a text that clearly uses one or more fallacies.]
- Students identify the places in a text where the author is explaining *other perspectives*. They point out the language patterns that indicate a change in perspective. They discuss whether the writer is making a concession, refuting a counterargument, or a combination.
- Students debate a topic and then use the most persuasive arguments to develop their *counterargument*.
- Instructor presents a statement such as "we will have more homework in this class, unless you can convince me not to." Students work in groups to prepare their most convincing arguments. After they present, students and instructor analyze what made the arguments convincing (ie, *ethos, pathos, and logos*; *concession and counterargument*; and/or *hedging language*). Then, students review their essay drafts to see if they use these same factors in their writing.
- Students write the main argument of their paper on paper (for a gallery walk) or in an online forum or record a voice forum. Peers respond to classmates pointing out possible areas where someone might disagree. Students then use that feedback to develop their *concession and counterargument*.
- Students identify *hedging language* and add it to their own writing.

6: Clarity and Style

- Students read a current opinion piece, TED talk with transcript, excerpt from a book, or classmates' essays.
 - They identify features of *academic voice* or compare two texts to determine which one uses more academic voice.
 - They identify places where *stronger and more specific word choices* could improve a sentence.
 - They identify places where the *active voice* could improve a sentence.
 - They identify examples of *wordiness* and revise. Challenge: reduce the word count of a paragraph by x number, maintaining or even improving the communication of the full meaning.
 - They identify the *tone* of a text and point out specific clues that indicate that tone.
 - They analyze the text for *sentence variety*. Challenge: Take a paragraph made of all simple sentences, and combine the sentences in the most effective ways.
- Students read a series of short articles on the same topic such as the *Suggested Supplementary Readings*. Students compare the *tone* of each and make a list explaining what factors influence the tone.
- In groups, students take a short academic text and "translate" it into another genre like a social media post. Then, they take a non-academic text on the same topic such as a social media post and "translate" it into *academic voice*. Afterwards, they reflect on the changes they made to each and review some of their own writing for areas to tighten the academic voice.
- Students trade paragraphs from their drafts and revise the peer's paragraph to improve the *word choice, academic voice, wordiness, tone, and sentence variety*. Then, the original writer examines the revision to see if their meaning is intact and decides which of the changes to include in the final draft.

General class activities that can be adapted to different content

Example syllabi

- [Example Syllabus #1.docx](#)
- [Example Syllabus #2.docx](#)

Example assignments and rubrics

- [Example Summary Assignment.docx](#)
- [Example Synthesis Assignment.docx](#)
- [Example Annotated Bibliography Assignment.docx](#)
- 1A research paper rubric available on request from gwiner@peralta.edu (for courses one or two levels below transfer-level English, you can use the same rubric but add points to the score for the class assignment grade)

This page titled [10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

10.3: Reflection Essay

What is self analysis?

The final assignment may include a reflective essay in which you describe your growth as a writer over the course of the semester. This activity of reflecting on your growth and performance is what is called a metacognitive activity: one in which you think and write about your learning.

Writing a formal reflective essay may be a new thing for you, so this chapter will provide an overview of why we write reflections on our learning and how to approach a reflection assignment.

How is reflective writing in the academic setting different from journaling or writing in a diary?

If you write in a diary or a journal, recording your thoughts and feelings about what has happened in your life, you are certainly engaging in the act of reflection. Many of us have some experience with this type of writing. In our diaries, journals, or other informal spaces for speaking – or writing- our mind, write to ourselves, for ourselves, in a space that will largely remain private.

Your reflection essay for college courses will contain some of those same features:

- The subject of the reflective essay is you and your experiences
- You can generally use first person in a reflective essay

But writing academic reflections, like the one that is due for the English 100/101 portfolio assignment, is a bit different from journaling or keeping a diary:

	Personal diary/journal	Reflection essay for a course
Audience	Only you will read it! (at least, that is often the intention)	Professor, peers, or others will read your essay. A reflective essay is written with the intention of submitting it to someone else
Purpose	To record your emotions, thoughts, analysis; to get a sense of release or freedom to express yourself	To convey your thoughts, emotions, analysis about yourself to your audience, while also answering a specific assignment question or set of questions
Structure	Free form. No one will be reading or grading your diary or journal, so you get to choose organization and structure; you get to choose whether or not the entries are edited	An essay. The reflection should adhere to the style and content your audience would recognize and expect. These would include traditional paragraph structure, a thesis that conveys your essay's main points, a well developed body, strong proofreading, and whatever else the assignment requires
Development	Since you are only writing for yourself, you can choose how much or how little to elaborate on your ideas	All of the points you make in the essay should be developed and supported using examples or evidence which come from your experiences, your actions, or your work

What can be gained from metacognitive activities that ask you to reflect on your learning and your performance as a writer?

One of the major goals in any First-Year Writing class is to encourage students' growth as writers. No one is expected to be a perfect writer at the end of the semester. Your instructor's hope, however, is that after 16 weeks of reading, writing, and revising several major essays, you are more confident, capable, and aware of yourself as a writer than you were at the beginning of the semester. Reflecting on the process that you go through as you write – even if your writing is not perfect – can help you to identify the behaviors, strategies, and resources that have helped you to be successful or that could support your future success. In short, reflecting on how you write (or how you have written during a particular semester) can be quite powerful in helping you to identify areas where you have grown and areas where you still have room for more growth.

How can I write a reflective essay?

As with any essay, a reflective essay should come with its own assignment sheet. On that assignment sheet, you should be able to identify what the purpose of the reflective essay is and what the scope of the reflection needs to be. Some key elements of the reflective essay that the assignment sheet should answer are:

- What, exactly, the scope of the reflection is. Are you reflecting on one lesson, one assignment, or the whole semester?
- Do you have detailed guidelines, resources, or reference documents for your reflections that must be met?
- Is there a particular structure for the reflection?
- Should the reflection include any outside resources?

If you are struggling to find the answers to these questions, ask your professor!

Another wonderful resource for writing a reflective essay comes from [Writing Commons](#), in the article [“Writing an Academic Reflection Essay”](#). This article offers great information about the following:

- What it means to be “academic” or “critical” and at the same time personal and reflective
- How you can achieve focus in a reflective essay
- What “evidence” is in a reflective essay

INDEX

A

academic integrity
7.2: Using Direct Quotes

academic preparation
2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading

academic skills
1: Understanding the Learning Process

academic success
2.4: Annotation Strategies
5.1.1: Parallel Structure

academic writing
4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims
5.2: Essay Introductions
5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs
5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph
6.1: Peer Editing
6.3: Knowing When to Cite
6.4: Formatting Your Paper
7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases
8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words

academic_writing
10.3: Reflection Essay

academicwriting
6.2: Reverse Outline
7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence
8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument
8.5: Using Sentence Variety
9: Reflecting on Your Work

accuracy
10.1: Evaluating Your Sources

active
2: The Role of Active Reading

active reading
2.2: Effective Reading Strategies
2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader
2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example

active verbs
8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words

active voice
6.5: Language Toolkit

activism
4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text

activities
10: Exploring Additional Resources

advocacy
2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example
4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text

analysis
4.1: Understanding the Assignment
4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text
5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs
6.1: Peer Editing

analyzing
4: Planning Your Writing

analyzingarguments
10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities

annotation
2: The Role of Active Reading
2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example

APA style
7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases

appeals

8: Achieving Your Final Draft
8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade

argument

4.1: Understanding the Assignment
5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement

argumentation

6.2: Reverse Outline
8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals

art of persuasion

8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals

assignment

4: Planning Your Writing
4.1: Understanding the Assignment

assignments

10: Exploring Additional Resources

attribution

7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases

audience engagement

5.2: Essay Introductions

authority

10.1: Evaluating Your Sources

B

bias

10.1: Evaluating Your Sources

bilingual education

4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims

bilingualism

6.3: Knowing When to Cite
7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence

block quotes

7.2: Using Direct Quotes

Bloom's taxonomy

1: Understanding the Learning Process

body

5: Writing the First Draft

body paragraph

5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs

bodyparagraphs

6.2: Reverse Outline

brainfitness

7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence

brainstorming

3: Exploring the Writing Process
4: Planning Your Writing
4.3: Brainstorming

C

child protection

2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader

citation

6.3: Knowing When to Cite
6.4: Formatting Your Paper
7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence
7.2: Using Direct Quotes

claims

4: Planning Your Writing
4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims

clarity

5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement
6.2: Reverse Outline
6.5: Language Toolkit
8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words

classifications

10: Exploring Additional Resources

cognitive benefits

7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence

cognitive development

1: Understanding the Learning Process

cognitive psychology

7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence

college

1: Understanding the Learning Process

college courses

2.2: Effective Reading Strategies

college success

2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading

communication

8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals

community engagement

2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example

complexesentences

8.5: Using Sentence Variety

compoundcomplexsentences

8.5: Using Sentence Variety

compoundsentences

8.5: Using Sentence Variety

comprehension

2: The Role of Active Reading
2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading
2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader
2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing

concession

8: Achieving Your Final Draft

concluding sentence

5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs

conclusion

5: Writing the First Draft
5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph
6.1: Peer Editing

consumerresponsibility

8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument

Cornell Method

2.4: Annotation Strategies

counterargument

8: Achieving Your Final Draft

credibility

10.1: Evaluating Your Sources
8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade
8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals

critical reading

2.2: Effective Reading Strategies

critical thinking

2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading
2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader
5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement

criticalreading

10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities

criticalthinking

- 10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities
- 8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument

cultural awareness

- 6.3: Knowing When to Cite

currency

- 10.1: Evaluating Your Sources

D

DACA

- 2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing

dictionary

- 6.5: Language Toolkit

direct quotes

- 7.2: Using Direct Quotes

discussion

- 2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader

diversity

- 5.1.1: Parallel Structure

drafting

- 3: Exploring the Writing Process

Dreamers

- 2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing
- 4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text

E

editing

- 3: Exploring the Writing Process
- 4.1: Understanding the Assignment
- 8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words

education

- 1: Understanding the Learning Process
- 2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader
- 2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing
- 4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text
- 4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims
- 5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement
- 5.1.1: Parallel Structure
- 5.2: Essay Introductions
- 7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence

educational techniques

- 2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example

effective communication

- 5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement

effective notes

- 2.4: Annotation Strategies

effective writing

- 8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals
- 8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words

emotional appeal

- 8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals

environmentalimpact

- 8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument

essay

- 10: Exploring Additional Resources
- 4.1: Understanding the Assignment
- 4.3: Brainstorming
- 5: Writing the First Draft
- 5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph
- 6.4: Formatting Your Paper
- 9: Reflecting on Your Work

essay structure

- 5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph
- 6.1: Peer Editing

essay writing

- 7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases

essays

- 5.2: Essay Introductions

essaystructure

- 6.2: Reverse Outline

essaywriting

- 10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities

ethicalconsumerism

- 8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument

ethics in writing

- 8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals

ethos

- 8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade

evaluating

- 10: Exploring Additional Resources

evaluation

- 4.1: Understanding the Assignment
- 5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph

evidence

- 4: Planning Your Writing
- 4.3: Brainstorming
- 4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims
- 6.1: Peer Editing
- 7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence
- 7.2: Using Direct Quotes

evidenceanalysis

- 6.2: Reverse Outline

examples

- 4.3: Brainstorming
- 6.5: Language Toolkit

explanation

- 4.1: Understanding the Assignment

F

fashionindustry

- 8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument

feedback

- 10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities
- 3: Exploring the Writing Process
- 9: Reflecting on Your Work

final thought

- 5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph

first_year_writing

- 10.3: Reflection Essay

formatting guidelines

- 6.4: Formatting Your Paper

foundational knowledge

- 1: Understanding the Learning Process

G

global issues

- 2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader

grammar

- 3: Exploring the Writing Process
- 5.1.1: Parallel Structure

greatconversation

- 8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument

growth_as_writer

- 10.3: Reflection Essay

guide

- 10: Exploring Additional Resources

I

immigrant children

- 4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims

immigrant rights

- 2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example

immigration

- 2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader
- 4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text

information retention

- 2.4: Annotation Strategies

integrating quotes

- 7.2: Using Direct Quotes

introduction

- 5.2: Essay Introductions

introductions

- 5: Writing the First Draft

J

journaling

- 10.3: Reflection Essay

L

language skills

- 5.1.1: Parallel Structure

languagelearning

- 7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence

learning

- 1: Understanding the Learning Process

learningpath

- 10: Exploring Additional Resources

lecture notes

- 2.4: Annotation Strategies

logos

- 8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade

M

main idea

- 4.3: Brainstorming

memory

- 2.4: Annotation Strategies

metacognition

- 10.3: Reflection Essay

MLA style

- 7.2: Using Direct Quotes
- 7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases

multilingualism

- 7.1: Introducing and Explaining Evidence

multipleperspectives

- 8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument

N

neuroplasticity

- 1: Understanding the Learning Process

notes

- 2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example

O

objectivity

- 10.1: Evaluating Your Sources

organization

- 2.4: Annotation Strategies
- 4.3: Brainstorming
- 5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement

outline

- 4.3: Brainstorming

P

paragraphs

[5: Writing the First Draft](#)

parallel

[5: Writing the First Draft](#)

paraphrases

[7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases](#)

paraphrasing

[2: The Role of Active Reading](#)
[2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing](#)
[6.3: Knowing When to Cite](#)

Passive voice

[6.5: Language Toolkit](#)

pathos

[8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade](#)

peer editing

[6.1: Peer Editing](#)

peerediting

[6.2: Reverse Outline](#)

peerreview

[9: Reflecting on Your Work](#)

personal connection

[4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text](#)

personal growth

[2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading](#)

personal_reflection

[10.3: Reflection Essay](#)

personalreflection

[9: Reflecting on Your Work](#)

persuasion

[8: Achieving Your Final Draft](#)
[8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade](#)

persuasive writing

[5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement](#)
[8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals](#)

plagiarism

[6.3: Knowing When to Cite](#)
[6.4: Formatting Your Paper](#)
[7.2: Using Direct Quotes](#)

powerful

[4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text](#)

process

[3: Exploring the Writing Process](#)

productivity

[9: Reflecting on Your Work](#)

professional appearance

[6.4: Formatting Your Paper](#)

public policy

[2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example](#)

Q

quotations

[4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims](#)
[7.2: Using Direct Quotes](#)
[7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases](#)

quotes

[4: Planning Your Writing](#)

quoting process

[7.2: Using Direct Quotes](#)

R

racial bias

[5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs](#)

readability

[5.1.1: Parallel Structure](#)

reader engagement

[5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph](#)

readerinterest

[8.5: Using Sentence Variety](#)

reading

[2: The Role of Active Reading](#)
[2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading](#)
[2.2: Effective Reading Strategies](#)
[2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader](#)

reading speed

[2.2: Effective Reading Strategies](#)

reading strategies

[2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading](#)
[2.2: Effective Reading Strategies](#)

reading strategy

[2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example](#)

referencing

[6.3: Knowing When to Cite](#)

reflection

[10: Exploring Additional Resources](#)

reflective_essay

[10.3: Reflection Essay](#)

reflectivewriting

[9: Reflecting on Your Work](#)

relevance

[10.1: Evaluating Your Sources](#)

reliability

[10.1: Evaluating Your Sources](#)

research

[10.1: Evaluating Your Sources](#)
[10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities](#)
[4.1: Understanding the Assignment](#)
[4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims](#)
[5.2: Essay Introductions](#)

research skills

[2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading](#)

reverseoutline

[6.2: Reverse Outline](#)

revising

[3: Exploring the Writing Process](#)
[5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement](#)

revision

[10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities](#)
[8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words](#)

rhetoric

[8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals](#)

rhetorical

[8: Achieving Your Final Draft](#)
[8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade](#)

rhetorical appeals

[8.2: Recognizing Rhetorical Appeals](#)

S

self_analysis

[10.3: Reflection Essay](#)

selfevaluation

[9: Reflecting on Your Work](#)

sentence variety

[8: Achieving Your Final Draft](#)

sentencepatterns

[8.5: Using Sentence Variety](#)

sentencevariety

[8.5: Using Sentence Variety](#)

settings

[10: Exploring Additional Resources](#)

signal phrases

[7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases](#)

simplesentences

[8.5: Using Sentence Variety](#)

skill acquisition

[1: Understanding the Learning Process](#)

socialjustice

[8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument](#)

societal change

[4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text](#)

sociology

[2.5: Annotating a Text - a detailed example](#)

speaking

[8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade](#)

specific words

[8: Achieving Your Final Draft](#)
[8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words](#)

statement

[5: Writing the First Draft](#)

statistics

[4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims](#)

stereotype threat

[5.2: Essay Introductions](#)

storytelling

[5.2: Essay Introductions](#)

strategies

[2: The Role of Active Reading](#)
[2.3: Using Questions to Be an Active Reader](#)

strong verbs

[6.5: Language Toolkit](#)
[8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words](#)

strong words

[8: Achieving Your Final Draft](#)

structure

[5: Writing the First Draft](#)

student engagement

[2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading](#)

student_development

[10.3: Reflection Essay](#)

studentengagement

[10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities](#)

study habits

[2.2: Effective Reading Strategies](#)

study skills

[1: Understanding the Learning Process](#)
[2.4: Annotation Strategies](#)

study strategies

[2.4: Annotation Strategies](#)

studying

[2.2: Effective Reading Strategies](#)

summarizing

[2: The Role of Active Reading](#)
[2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing](#)

summary

[5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph](#)

support

[4: Planning Your Writing](#)
[4.4: Using Evidence to Support Claims](#)
[9: Reflecting on Your Work](#)

supporting evidence

[5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs](#)
[6.1: Peer Editing](#)

supporting paragraph

[4.3: Brainstorming](#)

Supreme Court

[2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing](#)

sustainablefashion

[8.4: Writing Concession and Counterargument](#)

synthesis

[4.1: Understanding the Assignment](#)

T

teaching

[3: Exploring the Writing Process](#)

teachingstrategies

[10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities](#)

technical writing

[5.1.1: Parallel Structure](#)

text

[4: Planning Your Writing](#)

text analysis

[2: The Role of Active Reading](#)

[2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing](#)

textanalysis

[10.2: Suggested Assignments and Activities](#)

textual evidence

[5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs](#)

thesaurus

[6.5: Language Toolkit](#)

thesis

[4.3: Brainstorming](#)

[5: Writing the First Draft](#)

thesis statement

[5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement](#)

[5.2: Essay Introductions](#)

[5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs](#)

[5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph](#)

[6.1: Peer Editing](#)

thesis statements

[5.1.1: Parallel Structure](#)

thesisstatement

[6.2: Reverse Outline](#)

time management

[2.2: Effective Reading Strategies](#)

toolkit

[6.5: Language Toolkit](#)

topic sentence

[5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs](#)

[6.1: Peer Editing](#)

transitions

[6.5: Language Toolkit](#)

trust

[8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade](#)

U

understanding

[4: Planning Your Writing](#)

undocumented immigrants

[4.2: Choosing Quotes and Analyzing a Text](#)

undocumented students

[2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing](#)

V

vocabulary development

[2.1: The Nature and Types of Reading](#)

W

word choice

[8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words](#)

workplace

[5.1.1: Parallel Structure](#)

works cited

[6.3: Knowing When to Cite](#)

[6.4: Formatting Your Paper](#)

writing

[3: Exploring the Writing Process](#)

[4.1: Understanding the Assignment](#)

[4.3: Brainstorming](#)

[5: Writing the First Draft](#)

[5.1: Writing a Thesis Statement](#)

[5.1.1: Parallel Structure](#)

[5.2: Essay Introductions](#)

[5.4: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph](#)

[6.5: Language Toolkit](#)

[8.1: Using Rhetorical Appeals to Persuade](#)

[8.3: Using Strong and Specific Words](#)

writing improvement

[6.1: Peer Editing](#)

writing skills

[2.6: Paraphrasing and Summarizing](#)

[5.3: Writing Body Paragraphs](#)

writing standards

[6.4: Formatting Your Paper](#)

writing tips

[7.3: Integrating Quotes Using Signal Phrases](#)

writing_process

[10.3: Reflection Essay](#)

writingprocess

[9: Reflecting on Your Work](#)

writingrevision

[8.5: Using Sentence Variety](#)

writingstyle

[8.5: Using Sentence Variety](#)

writingtips

[6.2: Reverse Outline](#)

GLOSSARY

S

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

This page titled [Glossary](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

DETAILED LICENSING

Detailed licensing information for this resource is not available at this time.

This page titled [College Success and Advanced ESL Writing](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.

DETAILED LICENSING

Detailed licensing information for this resource is not available at this time.

This page titled [College Success and Advanced ESL Writing](#) is shared under a [CC BY-NC 4.0](#) license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Talley Caruso.